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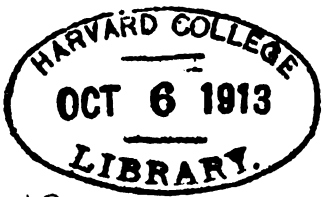

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WRITINGS

OF

JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

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WRITINGS OF JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 72 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

THE HAGUE, July 2, 1796.

SIR:

. . . . . .

In my letter to Mr. Randolph of April 2, 1795, I mentioned a complaint of Mr. Bourne that several American captains had in the midst of the preceding winter discharged their sailors, and thereby thrown many of them upon the streets to suffer the extreme severity of an unexampled season, or to depend altogether upon the consul for relief. The difference in the current rate of mariners' wages between the American and European prices was the temptation which induced some captains to a conduct so inhuman and iniquitous, and the sailors who suffered in consequence of it were so numerous, that I then took the liberty to recommend the subject to the attention of the Secretary of State, as deserving the special provision of a remedy to the evil. I have heard no further complaints against Mr. Parish, since I had the honor to write you from London in answer to your favor of November 23, 1795.[1] The occasion in which I presume the disposition to complain against him had originated is past, and it is probable that his character as a British subject and agent is the principal, if not the only objection against his continuing to hold the office of American consul. The objection if resolved into this general one, that he is not a native, nor even a citizen of the United States,

[1] See Lodge, *Life and Letters of George Cabot*, 107*n*.

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I freely confess in my mind is of great weight. Indeed the consular office appears to me, in the particular situation of the United States, to be of importance sufficient to deserve the particular attention of the government. Our commercial relations with all the maritime nations are already very considerable, they must increase in due proportion with the growing prosperity of the country. The admission of our navigation into the Mediterranean will soon enlarge its extent still more. As we have no political connections with the interest of Europe in many of its states, the consul will be the only officer to protect and defend the interests of our citizens against the impositions and frauds, to which strangers are everywhere peculiarly liable. In times of maritime war the experience of the present time abundantly proves, that an object no less interesting than the peace itself of the United States may essentially depend upon the conduct of their consuls. I believe I hazard nothing in saying, that if the conduct of all the American consuls during the last three years had been distinguished for integrity, veracity, and impartiality, or even neutrality towards the belligerent powers, our commerce would have been much less harrassed by their depredations. *I am sure* it would have been more favorably regarded in the Courts of Admiralty, to which the laws of nations assign the decisions in cases of neutral capture.

It is therefore important upon similar occasions, which we may with confidence expect will often recur among the nations of Europe, our consuls should be *responsible men*, and as their temptations at such periods to depart from the line of their duty prescribed by the neutrality of the nation they represent, must necessarily be greater, it is alike important that they should be impartial men, of settled principles and of strict integrity. These requisites are not easily

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to be secured from strangers to our government and nation. They cannot be hoped for from the subjects or citizens of a belligerent power.

. . . . . .

I have the honor &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, July 21, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your favor of May 19th has lately been transmitted to me from England, and relieved me from some anxiety I had entertained for the fate of my letters written at London, as it mentions the receipt of them all to the middle of February. Since then I trust you have received three more from England, and there are now on the passage two written since my return here.

I have a letter from one of my friends at Boston, dated June 7th, but it contains no politics, nor indeed a word relative to any public affairs. The impatience of expectation, they say, always increases in proportion to the proximity of the object to be attained. I now think almost day and night upon the delivery of the Western posts. My letters from England speak very confidently upon the subject, and I have been equally confident myself that they would be delivered, if the House of Representatives did not prevent it by first violating the treaty in the refusal to concur for its execution. But I now hope for the event as anxiously as it is dreaded by all the Gallo-Americans, and those who direct their conduct and dictate their opinions.

Not that I consider this event as taking altogether away the danger of our being yet involved in the war that still rages in Europe; for I am apprehensive that the present

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prevailing system of the French government is, that we *must* be drawn into it at all events; and as long as men who court popularity in America, dare to speak openly of their devotion to the interests of France as they have done for years back, and lose none of their influence by the barefaced avowal of such a partial foreign attachment, I shall always dread the danger of seeing the whole weight of that influence directed towards an object pernicious to our best interests.

Upon the occasion of the crisis produced by the proceedings of the House of Representatives on the treaty with Britain, the sentiments of the people on the question of war or peace were again brought to a test, and again they discovered their adherence to their true interest. But *varium et mutabile* is the popular voice even in America. What was its language, what its professions six months ago? What will they be six months hence? While the people of the United States suffer themselves to be made the instruments of men acting under the impulse of a foreign power, while they will be played upon by springs which lose not their efficacy by detection, who shall answer for that permanency of wisdom and firmness which alone can preserve them from the vortex of war, towards which they are continually impelled?

The French government know perfectly well the aversion to war which is so strongly felt by the American people, and as they found their influence *in that country* upon their popularity, they have never avowed the desire of involving us in the war, but on the contrary have occasionally denied it most explicitly. The conduct of Genet in this particular must be fresh upon the mind of everyone; but I have had again and again the strongest assurances from members of their government and persons connected with it, that they

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were fully satisfied with our neutrality, and do not wish us to depart from it. At the same time they omit no opportunity to stimulate our resentment against Britain, and the other day, during the interval, while it was believed our House of Representatives would *annul* the treaty with Britain, the French Minister here, and his agents, as well as the members of the present government here, all appeared convinced that we *must go to war* with Britain, and adapted all their conversations to that expectation. The tone is totally changed since the resolve in the House on the subject has been ascertained.

On this occasion I think it necessary to mention *to you* that our old friend D[umas] appears to be retained in the service of the French Republic as he was in that of the Monarchy. He is as much devoted, if not as useful, to the Citizen Noël, as he ever was to the Duke de la Vauguyon,[1] or to the Marquis de Verac. The old man is extremely miserable, and thinks he has no wish left but to die. But his passions and his prejudices are as strong as they could have been in the flower of youth, and the little judgment that he ever had to control them has abandoned his old age. He is acting a part between the French Minister and me which he would find it difficult to justify, either as a pensioner of the United States, or as an old personal friend of yours and of myself. He imagines I am not aware of it, and I must so far do his heart the justice to believe that he is not altogether aware of it himself. I shall take care to let it do no harm, and indeed I believe I have put an end to it already.

The interval between the information of the several resolutions in the House of Representatives on the 17th of April against the treaty, and on the 30th of the same

[1] Antoine Paul Jacques de Quélen, Duc de la Vauguyon (1706–1772).

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month to execute it, give rise indeed to many observations in my mind. The contents of the Treaty have been well known here these nine or ten months. Its material stipulations had been known from common report many months before. The merchants had procured the information with their usual industry by means of their English correspondents, and the essential articles were often accordingly mentioned by them as being fully understood. But never until the period of the interval above mentioned was a syllable of dissatisfaction at the treaty or any of its contents uttered by any person in this government, though several of them would certainly not have been backward to express it had they felt any. Then however the lesson ready conned was repeated, and intimations were conveyed to me that umbrage was taken here at two of the stipulations. The one that free ships should not make free goods, and the other that prizes captured by Dutch vessels should not be sold in the ports of the United States.[1] The objections are curious, when their own allies have not observed the former principle though specially bound by a previous treaty so to do, and when the latter, if it had been expressly secured to them as a right, could have been of no possible utility to them; since so far from taking prizes on the coast of the United States, they can get none but such as a tempest occasionally drives upon their own. But the nature of the complaints serves to show from whence they came, the liveries indicated to whom they belonged. Since the resolution of April 30 is known, all is silent again, and I have not heard a word more of their hopeful objections. I may add one circumstance more. One of the ablest men among them, a

[1] Art. 25 applies to "any foreign privateers (not being subjects or citizens of either of the said parties) who have commissions from any other Prince or State in enmity with either nation."

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man who has some independence in his spirit and whom I believe to be a friend to the United States, has plainly hinted to me that the expectation and hope of a war between the United States and Britain was very sanguine among his colleagues, and that they drew from it inferences in which he believed they would be mistaken. I have heretofore written to you that Mr. Paine was writing a pamphlet against the Treaty. It was announced with some emphasis some months ago, but has not yet appeared. I have the fact from the very best authority, from Mr. Pinckney immediately after his return to London through Paris, where he saw Paine. When he mentioned the circumstance I did not disguise my feelings on the subject. I told him "I thought it *rather late in the day* (it was after the ratifications were known to have been exchanged) for Mr. Paine to publish such a pamphlet, considering *that he lived as an inmate in Mr. Monroe's house.*" Mr. Pinckney replied that he thought so too, that he was sorry for the circumstance, and "that it gave uneasiness to Mr. Monroe. But that when THOMAS PAINE *took a thing into his head*, he did not know anybody on earth that could dissuade him from it."

But the French government wish us to go to war, *not for them*, but on our own account; they wish to have the benefit of our opposition to their enemy, without being clogged with any stipulations to assist us; to use us in the present war as their Court used the Dutch in the last. This being very decidedly the case, I shall now only relate to you the conduct they have recently held towards other neutral powers, from which we may learn what course of policy *we* may expect from them.

In Sweden the object was to produce a war with Russia, which of course would, under the present alliance of the latter with Britain, become a war between Sweden and Britain.

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The business had been conducted very far towards an issue, and the appointment of General Pichegru as the Ambassador of the Republic in Sweden indicates that military talents were the principal qualities considered as requisite for that mission. But before the necessary preparations could be made the Russian Cabinet assumed a tone and a conduct which defeated them entirely. The Swedes for a day or two talked of war, but the plain fact was it was coming upon them sooner than they had expected, and before they were ready. The gauntlet of war was thrown down by the Empress, and thirty thousand men were on their march into Finland. The terms prescribed as an indispensable condition for the continuance of peace were imperious and humiliating to the highest degree. But resistance was vain; the example of Poland was recent, before their eyes, and unqualified submission was the only means of averting a similar fate. You doubtless saw among the English papers which I sent you a note delivered by the Russian Chargé des Affaires, assigning the reasons for which his Court had refused to receive the Swedish Minister sent to notify the intended marriage of the King. The authenticity of that note has been very formally *denied* by the Swedish Government, but I believe it is not *doubted* by any body else. The King's marriage is in fact broken off, though it had been notified to all the Courts, and the usual congratulations had been returned by some of them.[1] Pichegru after accepting the French Embassy to Sweden resigned it a few days after, and the Baron de Staël has leave to absent himself from Paris. He was to present the Baron de Rehausen (a young man who had been in disgrace at the Regent's Court for some

[1] Gustavus IV (1778–1837) was about to be betrothed to the Grand Duchess Alexandra, granddaughter of Catharine II, but was prevented by his refusal to allow her to worship according to the rites of the Greek Orthodox Church.

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concern real or supposed in the affair of Armfeldt [1]) to be the *chargé des affaires* during his absence. The Directory refused to receive him as flatly as the Empress had refused the Ambassador sent to notify the royal marriage. Here the matter now rests, and the fairest prospect of Sweden is that of having only to bear a public insult from France for having been too weak to contend with Russia.

The Danish government hitherto has been more fortunate by keeping itself more reserved from both parties. The intrigues of both have been equally active there as in Sweden, but the prevalence and firmness of the Count de Bernstorff have hitherto happily steered between them. The Dutch vessels that I mentioned in my last letter as having been cut out of the port of Bergen have been restored by the orders of the British Government, and upon this occasion there are two observations that occur to me as worth mentioning. The first is, that the justice so speedily, so completely, so unusually, and I add upon *very good authority*, so unexpectedly rendered by the British government to the complaints from that of Denmark affords a proof that they are beginning to perceive the necessity of treating with some decency the representations of the neutral powers, and gives us good reason to expect that they will pay more regard to ours than they have heretofore. In this instance the satisfaction was complete, for the captain of the frigate who cut out the Dutch vessels was obliged by the orders of his own government to conduct them back to the place from which he had taken them. The other observation is, that the event of this affair has not given much satisfaction to the present rulers here. The restoration of their vessels was a thing about which they cared very little. But an oppor-

[1] Gustaf Mauritz, Count Armfeldt (1757–1814), who plotted to overthrow the regency in Sweden after the death of Gustavus III.

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tunity to hope for a war between Denmark and Britain was a precious thing. They do not like to lose it. They valued the *pretext* much more than the *property*.

But the principal subject deserving *our* reflections is the treatment which the *neutral* Italian states are suffering from the victorious general of a French army, which has penetrated into the heart of that country, and which they are as unable to resist as Sweden was that of Russia. The manner in which the Genoese and Venetian territory was occupied, notwithstanding the opposition of their governments, has been mentioned before, and Buonaparte's threat of burning Verona. He has since imposed a contribution upon the Republic of Lucca, and obliged it to furnish him with arms. I observed to you in my last letter that the Tuscan government would be very much under the French influence. You will doubtless see in the public papers what has recently taken place in that territory. It is not yet eighteen months since the *neutrality* of the Grand Duke [1] was recognized and confirmed by the French republic in a solemn treaty. But Buonaparte has not only taken his march towards Rome through the Tuscan territory; he has taken possession of Leghorn, and under his order the French Consul has laid his hands upon all the property belonging to the subjects of the sovereigns at war with France that was to be found in the city. The English it seems had such intimations, or such fears of this event, that they just made out to remove a great part of their property by water before he surprised the town. He arrested the Governor of Leghorn, and demands his punishment of the Grand Duke, at the same time affecting to assume great merit and complaisance in not having himself ordered him to be tried by a military commission. In short the whole of these proceedings, none of

[1] Ferdinand III, son of Leopold II.

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which have been disavowed by the Directory, deserve the very attentive consideration of Americans as neutrals. They shew in the clearest light how the French under their present government are disposed to treat those of *their friends* whom they have in their power. You know whether my general sentiments are tinged with a partiality favorable to Britain; but I shall not disguise my opinion that in the respect for neutral powers her late conduct in the instance above related towards Denmark, is very much to her honor when compared with these proceedings of France. For this singular conduct in the Tuscan territory not the shadow of a reason is offered. Buonaparte gives his accounts of it to the Directory as a matter of course; he tells it even with the same kind of exultation, that the exterminations at Lyons, Nantes, and numberless other places within the French Republic, used to be announced about two years ago.

One great object doubtless intended by the seizure of Leghorn was the acquisition of plunder. The *spoils* of war have become a very serious and important concern to France, for she has scarce any other means left of maintaining her armies. But another point of essential consequence is the pursuit of the plan which I mentioned to you in my last letter, of excluding the British navigation, warlike and commercial, from the Mediterranean. A third object which they hoped to attain by these measures is to force the Italian states into a war with Britain, and indeed it seems not easy to see how the British Government can avoid one with Tuscany, after having made war against their own allies the Dutch for being under French influence, after they found themselves unable to defend them against French invasion.

From all the circumstances I have related, and from the general conduct of the French government in all its Protean

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shapes from the days of Vergennes to the present, I am convinced their influence will be indefatigable in fomenting all the passions in America hostile to Britain. They are not at present in a very good humor with us, and I suspect would scruple very little to treat us as they have Tuscany, Venice, Genoa and Lucca, if we were as much in their power. They have it in their power to treat us as they have Sweden, and I should not be much surprised to see them uncivil to us, if an occasion should present itself. How far the temper they now bear towards the American government has been excited and is now stimulated by the conversation and conduct of Americans in Paris, I shall not undertake to say. I have already more than once observed to you that there are things fit for the relation of any voice but mine.

There are, however, in these same events some grounds upon which to found the hope for the security of our neutrality during the remainder of the war. The exclusion of the British from the Mediterranean, or at least from the Italian ports, in all probability must continue as long as the war will last. This is an object of great consequence, as it will affect not only their commerce, but even their manufactures. It will certainly contribute to distress the nation, and in proportion as they lose their friends (I mean the nations with whom they maintain the intercourse of peace,) those that remain to them *must* become the more valuable in their estimation. They will therefore treat them with more deference, and will at least abate their injuries if not their insolence. It will be an advantageous opportunity for our government to urge with peculiar force not only justice for the future, but satisfaction for the past. I have no doubt but if properly urged it will be with effect. The British will I think be cautious not to repeat their offences, and they will be more compliant in the reparation of those

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already committed. The recent instance in the case of Denmark affords a clear proof of fact to support what appears so rational in speculation. If their navigation should be excluded from Italy, as I think it must be, ours having just obtained admittance there will naturally become the carrier of the trade, which will probably continue, because it is highly necessary for both parties. This will perforce burst another thread of their navigation laws. It will prepare them for that sort of liberality in their future commercial negotiations with us which they have *not yet* exhibited. They will *feel* the necessity of our friendship, and will accordingly observe a more friendly line of conduct. With all the attachment of my countrymen for France I believe they have too much sense and virtue, as well as knowledge of their own interest, to be either persuaded or bullied by her into a war for her benefit, when it has certainly become on her side a war merely of conquest and plunder, provided no new cause of resentment and irritation be given them by the future conduct of Britain.

In writing to you I never know when to finish. I have now exhausted only a single subject, and there are others both of a public and private nature upon which I intended when I began this letter to make several observations. I must now be content to postpone them for a future opportunity, having only time to add the usual assurances of grateful affection from your son.[1]

[1] "The intention of the president to retire at the expiration of his present term of service, I fear is unquestionable from what is mentioned in your letter. I have many reasons to regret the circumstance. I do not assent entirely to the opinion very prevalent in Europe, that the destinies of the United States depend solely upon that man, but I really deem his continuance in office, *at present*, of great importance to their welfare. As long as our neutrality shall not be placed beyond all possible danger, I shall always believe the weight of his character and influence very necessary to secure it." *To Christopher Gore*, July 26, 1796. Ms.

"In one of the recent debates, Mr. Hahn, being then President of the Assembly

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TO ENOCH EDWARDS[1]

THE HAGUE, August 12th, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

Since I wrote you last I have had the pleasure of receiving your letter of June 20th. I duly estimate the prudential motives which induced you to forbear writing me previous to that date, and regret that so simple an errand as that upon which I went to England, and upon which I had so repeatedly and so frequently conversed with you, should have given

and one of the men who from the beginning of the revolution has been among the most distinguished and influential characters, made a speech in which he said that a *federal* government was an absurdity, a mere creature of imagination, a contradiction in terms. That *government* implies a controling power, and federalism several controling powers, which must be always different from and sometimes opposed to it. That in the necessary conflict of equal powers, one or the other of them must be destroyed, or both must be made ineffectual. He would not even allow that the present government of the United States could be considered as exhibiting a refutation of his opinion, but attributed the present state of their Union to the personal character and influence of the President." *To the Secretary of State*, July 17, 1796. Ms.

"The Massachusetts choice of Senators is excellent [Theodore Sedgwick and Benjamin Goodhue], but the loss of such a man as Mr. Cabot is very much to be regretted. I presume that his not being rechosen must have been the consequence of his own determination. I remember hearing his brother observe last winter, that he was resolved to retire at the expiration of his term. Mr. Strong must have resigned to make the second vacancy. These retreats and resignations may perhaps prove the spirit and independence of the men, but they will encourage rather than disappoint the malevolence of that factious spirit, which begins to steep itself in so much bitterness in our country. You remember one of Fauchet's precious confessions is, that the attack against Mr. Hamilton in the spring of 1794 was meant to induce his retirement by disgusting him, if he could not be displaced, by a charge of mal-administration, and you recollect with what sympathy of regret he mentions the failure of *both* the intentions. It is a regular standing policy of the party, and the number of resignations among the firmest and most valuable men, gives reason to lament that it is in one particular successful." *To Joseph Hall*, August 7, 1796. Ms.

[1] The quality of the "intelligence" given by Edwards may be seen in *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 79.

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the trouble of speculation to *some*, or should not have been looked on goodnaturedly by others. As I have long since, very much to my satisfaction, been relieved from all agency whatever of a public nature in that country, I can have no motive of public utility or of private curiosity, to inquire who the some were that speculated, and the *others* that were not good-natured. With you I conversed with great freedom and sincerity on the subject, and I must do both you and myself the justice to say that I have had no occasion to regret my confidence. Where there is nothing to conceal, candor is perhaps the best shield.

I learn with much concern that the residence of Paris is not so pleasant for Americans as it has been. What the *ultimate* effect that the agreement of the House of Representatives to carry into effect the treaty will be, I am equally with yourself unable to guess. I most sincerely hope that not only the peace, but the cordial harmony between the United States and France, will not be interrupted because I am deeply convinced that its preservation is equally beneficial to the people of both nations, as well as to the interests of general humanity; and because I am equally persuaded, that with prudence and that mutual spirit of patriotism which you describe in such glowing colors as prevailing in France, and which I hope prevails with equal ardor in every part of America, it may be preserved.

That the war goes on with great spirit on the part of France is, as you observe, known and felt by all Europe. I do not thoroughly understand what you mean by the expression that she will not stop until she has materially altered the condition of Great Britain. If it is only that she will reduce her power, I do not see that such an event would be displeasing to any part of Europe. It is indeed apparent that the ancient national rivalry between the two nations

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burns at the present moment with a vivid flame, but the cool and sober part of mankind I think must wish as philanthropists, if not as politicians, that the rage of national resentments may subside on either part, and the policy of doing each other the greatest possible mischief give place to that of living in peace and harmony.

The intelligence of the plenteous harvest and the prospect of future abundance enjoyed by France is of a very pleasing nature. Though it may possibly reduce the prices of some productions of our country, I believe that even the American farmer and merchant will heartily join with you and me in rejoicing at the plenty which narrows his market and impairs his profits.

The increasing gaiety of Paris, the appearance of reciprocal kindness and benevolence, the abundance of amiable society, the augmentation of manufactures and the important improvements and inventions that are daily adding to the general stock of knowledge and of human enjoyment, are all circumstances which indicate promising prospects, and although they talk much of *autrefois*, the natural propensity of mankind to admire past enjoyments will lead to the anticipation that the present may become an *autrefois* in its turn.

The prospects of general peace on the continent which are daily becoming more apparent, are to me a great fund of satisfaction. As a man and as an American, I consider even universal peace as a consummation devoutly to be wished, and therefore hail with pleasure every event that has a tendency to procure it. When France and Britain shall be left the only combatants, I hope that they too will soon consider on both sides that the blessings of peace are preferable to the glory of destruction.

I remain with great regard and consideration, dear Sir, &c.

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TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, August 13, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

A few days ago I received from England together your favors of March 25, May 5, and June 10. The two first were brought to London and forwarded from thence by Mr. Cook,[1] whom as recommended by you I shall be happy to see either here or in England, if his or my peregrinations should at any time bring us within reach of each other. At the same time I received with several other letters one from the Secretary of State, dated June 11, one day later than the last from you. But various circumstances induce me to believe the purport of its contents were then unknown to you, and even unexpected. You will perhaps think them rationally sufficient to induce a submission to the ostracism a little longer.

Your indifference concerning the event of a possible future competition; the determination to be altogether passive, and the intrepidity with which the prospects of either decision are contemplated, I readily believe; and rejoice in believing them, because I have no doubt but that the transaction will call for the exercise of all those qualities in an eminent degree. Besides the innumerable sources of opposition all native Americans, and the principles of which are so fully unfolded in your great political work,[2] you will expect all the art and intrigue of France, and all its weight and influence concerted with the American adverse party in formal array displayed against you. Their talents at political manœuvre are well known and appreciated by you. The range of their means, comprehending every thing that can be achieved and limited by no scruple of general morality,

[1] Richard Cook, of Annapolis, Maryland.

[2] *Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States.*

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is understood. The popularity of their pretexts, the terror of their brilliant success in war, and the natural disposition among men of cringing before the insolence of victory, are duly estimated. You will also be prepared, I presume, for an opposition equally malignant though more concealed and perhaps, during the first period altogether inactive, from the rival influence of Great Britain; nor are you unaware of the dangers to which the station at the helm will be exposed at the most tempestuous political season that the world perhaps ever witnessed, when the elements of civil society are rapidly and inevitably returning to chaos in Europe, and at a moment when the fame of the predecessor has heaped to such accumulation the burden of the successor's task. All I am well convinced has been maturely weighed. It remains for me as a man, as an American, and as your son only to say *quod felix faustumque sit!* . . .

The British fleet in the Mediterranean has blockaded Leghorn, and they have in their turn taken possession of Porto Ferrajo in the island of Elba, which they say they hold merely to prevent the French from taking it, in order to direct from thence an expedition against Corsica. A number of privateers have been fitted out from Corsica to intercept the French commerce in the Mediterranean, who are said to have taken some neutral vessels bound to Leghorn. This circumstance has furnished the French government with an occasion to being forward another instrument of their new system, of which I have no doubt but you will hear much in America.

The political agents of France with all the neutral governments are directed to address to them *with energy* the voice of *their own interest*, and after telling them that they are upon the point of being made the victims of English ambition to declare, "that the French government are informed

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the English have issued new positive orders to their commanders of armed vessels to seize all cargoes *destinés aux François* in neutral vessels, and that the commanders of the squadrons and privateers of the Republic are ordered to treat the vessels of the neutral nations in the same manner as *their governments shall suffer* the English to treat them." This is to be stated as an act of reprisal against the British,[1] and is to be seasoned with proper encomiums upon the honor and generosity of France, and upon her profound respect for the laws of nations, *the only tie and security of civilized life*, as well as with proper sallies against the perfidy and Machiavelian policy of Britain. In connection with this may be mentioned that Mr. Adet is recalled, and *Mangourit*, the former noted consul at Charleston, appointed to succeed him.[2] Mangourit is now secretary to the French Legation in Spain. You have doubtless heard that it has

[1] "Soon after the publication of the letter from the French Minister of Foreign Affairs to their ambassador at Basle, I applied here for information whether any new order had been issued respecting the commerce and navigation of the neutral Powers, and was informed that no recent order had been issued, and that no such order existed as was ascribed to this government in the letter to Barthélemi. By an early opportunity I communicated this information to Mr. Monroe, who tells me in a letter of the 28 ultimo, that on his application to be informed whether orders were issued by the French government for the seizure of *neutral* vessels, he had been answered that no such order was issued, and that none would be issued, in case the British government did not authorise the seizure of *our* vessels. As I can only conjecture the motives which have induced these proceedings, and as they may be very wide of the truth, I will not trouble you with my suspicions. It would, however, have been serviceable to our trade with this country had Mr. Monroe's communication been somewhat earlier. The fall goods have been shipped, and principally insured here, under the disadvantages of an expected interruption of our navigation by the French cruisers." *Rufus King to John Quincy Adams*, London, September 10, 1796. Ms. King's letter to Monroe, August 11, 1796, is in *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 78.

[2] Michel-Ange-Bernard Mangourit (1752–1829). See note in *Correspondence of French Ministers* (Turner), 930; *Report of the American Historical Association*, 1897, 569.

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been in contemplation between France and Spain to exchange the port of Saint Domingo, ceded to the former by the late treaty of peace, for Louisiana upon our continent. There is at present in Paris one if not more of the South Carolinians who accepted the commissions of Genet, and drew upon themselves the animadversions of the South Carolina legislature. He has made himself very conspicuous among the Americans by every species of censure upon the President and the government of the United States. He has probably too much encouragement for such conduct and conversation, which by means of him and of other similar characters is so industriously spread among the Americans in Paris, as to make the French naturally conclude it must be the general public opinion in America. Several facts are here mentioned together, and you will probably be aware that they are not grouped altogether at random. Their connection will perhaps be much better understood by you, than it is comprehended by me. Our country must be upon its guard. I must add, however, that I am informed it is probable another person may be appointed instead of Mangourit.

Mr. Paine is said to be yet writing his pamphlet against the President of the United States and his administration, but he does not now live in the house of Mr. Monroe. He has retired to Surenne, a village near Paris. There was much threatening of this pamphlet and of this new mission last winter, but the latter measure was suspended by the French government, perhaps to give our House of Representatives an opportunity to refuse their concurrence for the execution of our treaty with Britain.[1] At present the threat at least

[1] The manuscript of Paine's letter had been brought to England as early as August 19, by a young Virginian, who was charged to deliver it to Benjamin Franklin Bache, in Philadelphia, by whom it was published. Monroe suspected that Paine's influence had been exerted with the Directory and had produced a change in the attitude of that body toward himself, making his position as the

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of both the measures is revived. The pamphlet war against the character of the President was begun under the auspices of the French government the last summer. If it is now to be renewed it will be still under their auspices, but they *may* perhaps discover that his personal feelings and fortunes are as inaccessible to their attacks as his fame. But as panegyric and calumny are equally among their means, and they are perfectly indifferent which of them it is they employ, the choice is decided by circumstances only, and they will at an hour's warning be prepared to erect a statue to him whom they find they cannot ruin.

American minister less eligible and useful. See the memorandum of conversations with Dr. E. Edwards in *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 79.

"In the Directoire the foreign affairs department belongs to Rewbell. He was on the committees of the convention at a time when much money was paid to the Americans, and before our government had consented to pay the debt. His impressions are unfavorable. He is honest, obstinate and sour. His impressions are now first got from La Croix, who figured at the 4 July, and those of the other members come through this doubly empoisoned channel. . . . Paine's pamphlet is sent to Philadelphia about six weeks ago, to be published by Bache. . . . I conversed with a person yesterday, who saw the manuscript. I begged him to get me a reading, as I have no connection and but slender acquaintance with the author. He promised his endeavors, but in general informed me, it was a philippic on the president's private life and public conduct from the year 1776, to the present day. The reason of this rancor is, the president's not getting him out of gaol. This subject warms him so much that he sometimes turns orator, and in a coffee house frequented by Americans, he has twice pronounced a string of the most virulent anathemas, concluding as proven that he was both a coward and a scoundrel. All you men of some estimation may prepare your armor; he is coming your way. He began with his God, and now he vilifies the best of his works. . . . Talleyrand conversed much of America two days ago. He spoke in favor of Burr, appeared to think he would make a good minister here. We went over several characters. I thought his ideas just. He then mentioned Hamilton, and whether it was policy or opinion, spoke of him in the highest terms. He said what every body says of his capacity, and that his political principles were truly American, unmixed with either French or English, which he regretted was a thing so prevalent." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Paris, October 20, 1796. Ms.

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But *measures and not men* is their maxim, and their only means of destroying a system is by attacking the person upon whom they suppose its support to depend. It may therefore be expected that the French government and their pamphleteers will from the same batteries only change the direction of their artillery. The object will remain the same, to *force us* out of our neutrality, to deprive us at least of all connection with Britain, and to alter our Constitution to such a form as shall give them a more certain and effectual influence over our national Executive.

The *energetic* mode in which they purpose to show the neutral governments *their own interests*, and the appointment of *Mangourit*, indicate that they mean to resume the system of terror in their external relations; and if I judge from the letters I receive from some of their adherents, they imagine that these new measures will throw the American government into such a profound consternation, that they will think themselves fortunate to obtain forgiveness by unqualified submission. They tell me of the *rage* of the French government at our treaty with Britain, of their *inflexible* determination to resent it by *some determined act*, of their *raising their tone* as they advance in victory, of the dreadful consequences to be apprehended from their resentments, and which nothing under Heaven can avert, unless it be peradventure the extreme prudence of Mr. Monroe in whom they have *very great confidence*. It is from native Americans that I receive under hand and seal this language, fit for the remorse of a worm of the dust in the presence of offended omnipotence, from a man particularly from Pennsylvania, a deep speculator in the French revolutionary funds and a confidential friend of Mr. Monroe,[1]

[1] Probably Enoch Edwards. The recall of Monroe had been recommended by the President's Cabinet July 2, and Pinckney received his appointment September

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together with Hichborn, whose conversation was of exactly the same complexion more than a twelve month ago.

The Drawcansir style of those letters would divert you if you should see them, because the intention with which they were written would be discerned by you at once. They profess to be confidential communications, but are so far from really possessing that character that, while they are all foaming with the froth of French indignation, they studiously conceal the *measures* which the Directory had determined to pursue, and which must have been known to the writer at the time when he wrote. Neither the orders to take enemy's property in neutral vessels, nor the recall of Adet, nor the appointment of Mangourît, were hinted to me by him. My *intelligence* comes from other quarters.

If they really mean to confiscate only enemy's property found in neutral vessels, that indeed will be an act violent and unjust enough, considering it as a direct and positive violation of the stipulation in our treaty; yet considering that our vessels will be like to have but little property to carry belonging to their enemies, and also that they cannot keep many armed vessels in any sea to infest our trade, owing to the naval superior force of their antagonist, I think they will not injure us much by this. If its eventual issue should be such as to control in some degree the overflowings of our commercial enterprise, a benefit may result from it as will weaken the shock of a diminished trade that must await us at the termination of a war, when all the parties now contending will encourage, as much as possible, their domestic navigation by the exclusion of that of strangers. But from the very vague manner in which the orders intimated to have been issued are expressed, they *may* design

9, 1796. *Writings of Washington* (Ford), XIII. 216*n*; *Writings of James Monroe*, III. 6.

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to extend the practice of depredation much further than the British ever have. They probably do not intend to treat us as the British have done *this season*, at least in these European seas; for they have not as I hear captured a single vessel for months past. Though they have had an undisputed command of the seas, and board almost every neutral vessel that floats upon them, they let them all pass, and there are numbers of Americans arriving now every day in the ports of this Republic, as well as in those of France.

If the admiralty courts of France are to condemn all the property found on board neutral vessels *destinés aux ennemis de la République Française*, and the expression is to be understood in all the latitude of which it is susceptible, it will be a treatment much more injurious than ever we have experienced from the British, as it will assume the principle of intercepting all our navigation whatsoever, destined to the ports of the nations at enmity with France. And I cannot believe this to be the intention. The manner in which the orders are executed will soon discover the design. I only give you conjectures which, with other circumstances perceptible to you though unknown to me, may have a tendency to prepare you for the explosion of the mine that is working.

I am unwilling to believe that the French government has been taught to found the support of their influence in the United States upon a wretched distinction between the policy and interest of one part of the Union, in opposition to those of another; or that they have been induced to suppose they could gratify and promote its agricultural by distressing its commercial power. I sometimes imagine that this recent order is rather meant as a false attack, to avert the attention of our government from another more formidable which they keep in reserve. It has indeed been

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hinted that they had thought of stopping their payment to those of our citizens to whom they are indebted, until our government shall have reclaimed the property taken from our vessels belonging to the inhabitants of St. Domingo. That they will catch at any pretext to stop their payments is very probable, since they have in many instances already stopped them without any pretext at all, except that of their own necessity. They have so many of the beasts with great bellies which must be fed, that plenteous as their plunder has been during the present campaign, their finances have become more and more irretrievable from day to day. But as this measure has [not] been formally announced, I question much whether it will be employed.

It is proper, however, that you should be aware that to all appearance they have seriously resumed the plan of revolutionizing *the whole world*, so openly professed by the Brissotine party in 1792, though at present they think proper totally to deny such a design. I have reason to believe, however, that they are stirring up the lees of democracy among their friends the Danes, and even in the dominions of their intended dear Prussian ally. In the states of all the German princes they are indefatigable, and are working upon materials which require scarce anything but the accidental spark to kindle a flame as devouring as that of France. The Directory have persisted in their refusal to receive the Baron de Rehausen as *chargé des affaires* from Sweden, and have ordered him to leave Paris. They have further ordered their chargé des affaires in Sweden to leave Stockholm, after assuring the Swedish *nation* of the friendship of the French Republic. There are some obscure symptoms indicating their disposition at the present juncture to inflame a political odium against the government of Venice, and in Geneva there has been, it is said, a new insurrection, in

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which the people deposed all their magistrates, and requested *the French President* provisionally to supply their places.

In the midst of all these revolutionary projects the Directory is not itself without internal enemies, equally disposed to overturn them and their constitution. It has been openly avowed as the object of the conspiracy at the head of which were Drouet and Babœuf. The trial of these persons is not yet completed.[1] At the annual municipal elections they were attended with tumult and massacre at Marseilles, at Aix, and several other places in the Southern Departments. At Paris the Directory were so apprehensive of similar consequences, that they found it expedient to address a proclamation to the people, warning them against the designs of the terrorists; and the renewal of one-third of the legislative councils at this moment is a period of particular anxiety to them. The rebellion in the Vendée appears to be finally quelled entirely, and the inhabitants are all disarmed. Paris is yet nearly in the same state, and has besides an army of sixty thousand men to secure its tranquility close at its gate. The government itself is said not to be united. *Sieyès* is opposed to their prevailing system, or at least preparing to abandon them in case of need. Their Minister of Foreign Affairs, if not involved more or less in the affair of Drouet, favors at least the terrorist party as much as he can. It is intimated that he keeps secret agents in foreign countries to act as spies upon the public acknowledged ministers appointed by the Directory. One of the Ministers from this Republic in France, and the Minister of Geneva, have been removed, owing to some kind of connection with the intrigues of Drouet. The General Buona-

[1] Jean-Baptiste Drouet (1763–1814), a member of the *corps Législatif*, escaped from prison with the connivance of the Directory; François-Noël Babœuf (1760–1797) was condemned to death.

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parte in Italy is said to pay them but little respect, and rumors with regard to him have circulated which the Directory have thought it necessary positively to contradict. They employ the same pamphleteering engines to fix themselves that they use to unseat every other government; and while with one hand they are endeavoring to tear up every root of confidence in settled establishments, with the other they are imploring for themselves the confidence of their own people and of foreign nations, without being able to obtain it.

From repeated intimations which have been made to me by the Danish Legation here, with which I have been upon very friendly terms from my first acquaintance with the Minister and the Secretary,[1] I find that the government of Denmark would be pleased to have an exchange of Ministers between the United States and them. They doubtless expect the compliment of receiving the first as the eldest party; but if they were sure of a *return*, I know not but they would overlook the mere point of sending first. It has been hinted to me that, while the United States have Ministers with almost all the commercial powers in Europe, it looks something like an unpleasant distinction to see them omit sending one to that which commands the passage of the Sound, and with which the United States have already a considerable direct commerce. I have never mentioned these circumstances before for two reasons. The first, because I had no inclination to promote the multiplication of the American foreign missions unnecessarily; and the second, because I thought it might tend to raise a suspicion of a personal motive on my part founded upon the desire to enlarge our diplomatic field. Under my present destination the latter cannot influence me, and I pretend not to

[1] Baron de Schubart and Mr. Levsen.

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judge of the necessity or propriety of the measure. I only state a fact and an argument as it has been presented to me, by persons who certainly did not use them without authority.[1]

Your dutiful son.

P.S. Our old friend Dumas died suddenly on the 11th instant.

TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

THE HAGUE, August 13, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The Minister Plenipotentiary from the French Republic informs me that the consuls of France both at Amsterdam and Rotterdam have violent suspicions that some of the captains of American vessels engage or receive on board of them soldiers belonging to the French army now in this country. At his desire I have to request you to give notice to all the American captains in both those ports, that it is expected they will avoid altogether receiving or engaging any such person, and that if in any instance they have already received persons of this description, they will immediately discharge them. Please to give notice of this circumstance to all the consular agents of the United States within this Republic, and to request them to use all the means within their competency to prevent every practice of this nature. I am etc.[2]

[1] No minister to Denmark was appointed until January, 1811, when George W. Erving was sent as "Special Minister."

[2] Citizen Noël had further asked Adams to authorize French officers to visit the American vessels to ascertain the presence of French soldiers on board; but Adams replied he had no power to authorize the visiting or examination of American vessels, and were he to assume the pretence of such power, it would not be recognized by the American captains.

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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 81 [Timothy Pickering]

The Hague, August 21, 1796.

. . . . . .

It is generally reported that the Emperor still persists in the continuation of the war, and that the French government have determined to enter into no negotiations with him, unless Great Britain be excluded from all interference or participation in them. The plan to ruin totally Great Britain is now professed by the French in general with a publicity which seems to partake of ostentation; it is perhaps undertaken seriously from an opinion of its *necessity* to France. The closing of all Europe against the British commerce is now avowed as an object pursued by the Directory. With regard to America the design is not said to be extended so far; but you will easily judge whether the measures they take towards the government of the United States indicate the determination to draw them into the vortex of a political system for Europe or not. It is a subject which in every point of view deserves the most particular attention.

Mr. Hammond is gone upon a special mission to the Courts of Berlin and Vienna. The purpose is supposed to be that of commencing a negotiation of peace. Whether France and Britain are like to agree upon their terms, even if they should treat, is doubtful; the ambition of conquest appears to thrive upon oratory in France, and the design of destroying totally the British power, which perhaps was at first conceived as an idle though a pleasing fancy, from the successes of the present campaign upon the continent, has gradually varied to an hesitating wish, grown to an aspiring hope, and ripened to a formal project. It offers a prospect equally flattering to their national pride and to their native and

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habitual antipathies. Their resentment against the British is inflamed by the constant reflection, that of all their enemies, they have inflicted the most and suffered the least of the miseries of war. They declare a determination to make no peace, without insisting upon the restoration of all their own islands, and all the Dutch possessions, both in the East and West Indies, which have been taken by the British. But as they do not appear to have any equivalent in contemplation, and it is not easy to see what equivalent they have to give, neither the present nor any other ministry in Britain would consent to terms which France appears determined to require. If known they come to treat seriously, the necessity for peace, which is really felt by both parties, and the desire for it, which is felt still more by the people of every nation engaged in the war, may bring on a spirit of concession which will facilitate the conclusion of a short peace.

But the French Government are evidently making their preparations to put in execution their singular plan of war against Britain, the season ensuing. That they will succeed in cutting off the communication between that island and all the rest of Europe, is not at all impossible, for Spain is yet balancing upon the edge of peace and war, and it is very currently reported that the French Government have demanded, and will probably obtain, the passage of an army through Spain to invade Portugal by land. This may be a menace of France held up to frighten Portugal into their terms of peace, but it may with equal probability be a serious design to dispose of troops, which, in case of peace with the Emperor, will remain upon their hands, and which must be furnished with employment. The plan will be most likely to fail in the countries upon the Baltic, but they may compel Denmark as they have Sweden to take a side,

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and they may have large temptations to offer, if at the same time they can provide for defence.

If the design should be carried fully into effect, it still remains a question what the balance of its operation will be. There is no doubt but that it will very much distress the British commerce; but it will distress in like manner all the commerce of Europe. The consequence must be an universal stagnation, and if it should be continued for any length of time, it must end in a commercial revolution from Lisbon to Archangel, as complete as the political revolution from which it will arise. It is to be hoped for the general interests of humanity that the threatening appearance of a more extensive war than the present will subside, and that a peace of some sort will be arranged before the commencement of the next season.[1] . . .

[1] "It is not for me to conjecture, what has been at the same time their course of negotiation with the United States. There is, I am well assured, in the present French government a party whose opinions and dispositions are not unfavorable or unfriendly to the interests of the United States; whether there are others who think that the American republic thrives too rapidly and suspect a danger that it may be tempted to abuse its prosperity; or who believe that the ports of America must at all events be shut against the British commerce, it may be useless for me to enquire, as it is no doubt well known to you.

"Among the projects, which in the moment of victorious exultation were held out, either with serious intention, or as a warning intimation, was said to be that of obtaining Louisiana by cession from Spain, and Canada by conquest from Britain. A design to undertake seriously an expedition of this nature, and of sending a powerful armament to New Orleans, has at least been under consideration in the Directory, and may have had some influence in causing the recall of Mr. Adet, without the substitution of a successor. It is probable however that this plan will give way to objects of more urgency on this continent, and if so, the appointment of another minister may soon be expected." *To the Secretary of State*, October 16, 1796. Ms.

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TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, October 2d, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

The last post brought me your favor of the 22nd ultimo, containing interesting information for which I am obliged to you. The public declaration of the French government by their Ambassador at Basle, with regard to their respect for neutral rights and their determination to imitate the examples of Britain, is not very explicit.[1] Perhaps it was so intended. I hope that further reflection will induce the Directory to take their national engagements, rather than the example of the British, for the rule of their conduct. If however they determine to take enemies' property wherever found, I suppose it is because they do not consider it as a violation of the laws of nations. Their declaration at Basle indeed seems to say to the neutrals, "we will insult and injure you, because we see you are too weak to resent the insults and injuries of others." The policy is not uncommon in practice, but I believe it has not before been often avowed.

The treaty between France and Spain I have seen in the papers. It contains nothing relative to the exchange.[2] Are you sure that the exchange has been made? As to their armament to New Orleans and their conquest of Canada, I think it will end with their invasion of England, and the joint march of their three armies to Vienna, together with their march through Spain to take possession of Lisbon. All

[1] See note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs to Barthélemy, August 7, 1796, in *Annual Register*, 1796, 248. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 89.

[2] Florida and Louisiana were, rumor said, to be ceded by Spain to France, in return for a restoration of the Spanish part of Santo Domingo, or some other equivalent. The treaty between France and Spain, signed August 19, 1796, is in the *Annual Register*, 1796, 231.

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these things are easy to project, and I shall not say they are of impossible execution; but while they are in the serious contemplation of the French government, it is not probable that their wish or intention to make peace is very strong.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO RUFUS KING

THE HAGUE, October 3, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

It gives me great pleasure to find that a satisfactory termination to the questions of our captured vessels and property is to be expected. The principal difficulties I think arise from a fundamental variance upon principles of national law. The maritime law of nations recognized in Great Britain is all comprised in one line of a popular song, "Rule Britannia! Britannia rule the waves!" I never could find that their Admiralty courts were governed by any other code.[1]

I had some time since the honor to write you respecting the capture of property to a considerable amount, belonging to a certain German mercantile house, subject to the Elector Palatine, on board of an American vessel.[2] The newspapers

[1] "It has given me great pleasure to hear that Colonel [John] Trumbull was drawn as the fifth Commissioner. You know how much I have supposed would depend upon the chance of that appointment. I believe with you that *all* the Commissioners will be guided by wisdom, integrity, and *what they think* justice. But British justice in questions of maritime law is a very different thing from natural justice. The professed object of the nation is to domineer at sea, and they have assumed for the accomplishment of this object a set of *maxims* which cannot be conformable to natural justice, because that is impartial and reciprocal, while they are all promotive of British maritime domination." *To Joseph Hall*, October 9, 1796. Ms.

[2] The house was that of Jean and Gaspar Halbach & Sons, of Remscheid, near Düsseldorf. The ship was the *Congress*, Captain Thomas Reid.

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here have announced that the cargo of that vessel has been condemned at Halifax. I now take the liberty to inclose another paper which I have received from the proprietors of the goods. I know not upon what pretence this condemnation has been founded, which appears to be a clear violation of the treaty between the United States and Great Britain. It may, perhaps, be a case proper for the determination of the commissioners under the treaty, but I cannot disown my surprise that the British government to this day continues to countenance such proceedings. I express this sentiment to you with the more freedom, because I know that this matter will be urged close upon our government from another quarter, for purposes which I do not approve, but the object of which is altogether hostile to Great Britain. At the commencement of the present war the judge of an admiralty court in London might distinguish between neutral and *non-belligerent* powers, and declare his determination *to force* them out of their neutrality; the government has surely had time to think better of that design, and at this day may not refuse to consider a neutral as a friendly nation. But the design which they have abandoned may have been taken up by their enemies, and I cannot think them now desirous of contributing to the motives which would tend towards a declaration against them. They have not long since made a formal and ample satisfaction to the Court of Denmark for an insult committed by one of their officers, and I have seen the good effects of this measure to their interests. Let them at least cease to encourage perpetual insult and injury upon our navigation, and their enemies will be deprived of the strongest argument with which they would persuade us to join in the almost universal league that is thickening against them.

I am &c.

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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 86 [Timothy Pickering]

The Hague, November 4, 1796.

Sir:

In the letter from the Committee of Foreign Affairs,[1] a copy of which was inclosed with my last, they have raised pretensions and used expression upon which I have not thought it necessary to anticipate the opinion you will form, or the notice which you may think proper to take of them. But as it is possible that the tone and ideas may appear extraordinary, I think it necessary to add a few observations and some particulars of information which will make them more accountable.

The general disposition, even of the patriotic party in this country, favors cordially the neutrality of the United States. They have a very substantial reason for this disposition, as they are continually receiving remittances of interests upon their monies loaned to the United States; and as these are almost the only public funds upon which the payments are still punctual, they apprehend that the difficulties and the necessities of a war might produce a suspension or postponements on the part of the United States, similar to those of which many of the belligerent powers have given examples. But at the same time, the patriotic party can have no avowed will different from that which may give satisfaction to the government of France. They feel a dependence so absolute and irremovable upon their good will, that they sacrifice every other inclination, and silence every other, when the

[1] The members of this Committee were Jacobus Kantelaar, Jan Bernd Bicker, P. Hartog, Albert Johan de Sitter, W. A. de Beveren, Hugo Gevers and Jacob George Hieronymus Hahn.

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pleasure of the French government is signified to them in such a manner as makes an election necessary.

I received not long ago an intimation that one of the members of the Committee of Foreign Affairs had confidentially communicated to a friend a circumstance, which was intended to be kept profoundly secret. It was that the French government had determined to defeat, if possible, the treaty lately concluded between the United States and Great Britain, and had signified to the Committee of Foreign Affairs here their expectation, that they would concur with all their influence towards the same object. The tenor of their letter strongly serves to show the accuracy of the information. The object which the last paragraph of their letter aims at is not at all equivocal, but in considering the manner in which they urge their proposals, the address with which they pursue their point may be ranged on a level with their logic. After having undertaken formally to justify the condemnation of the *Wilmington Packet* cargo, because they concluded it to be French property, they make no difficulty to assume a right to *insist* upon the protection of Batavian property on board of American vessels. They call very loudly upon the United States to go to war with Great Britain, and make a *common cause* with the French and Batavian Republics. The whole of this singular passage might have excited a stronger sentiment than it did, had I not previously received the intimation mentioned above. Considering their language as dictated by an irresistible external impulse, an excuse for its singularity was derived from the necessities of their situation. In the answer which I have given, therefore, it was my endeavor to avoid every unnecessary discussion, and as far as possible every unpleasant expression. But the inconsistency of their pretensions with their own argument could not be passed without notice. Their oblique

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insinuation of treaties formed by the United States militating with that before contracted with this Republic, I thought it necessary to repel in the most decided and explicit manner. Their assertion of *numerous services* rendered by their Republic to the American nation authorized the reference in the answer to the reciprocal services and common utility, upon which I conceived the engagements between the two nations to be founded. As they very clearly hint a wish that the United States should violate some treaty concluded after that with the Batavian Republic, and make a common cause with them and France, I thought the honor and dignity of my country and its government required an explicit declaration in answer, that they would inviolably maintain their engagements with all other nations as faithfully as with this. But I did not think it necessary, though it might have been not unfair, to observe that their proposal of a common cause to be made with the French Republic could not be made by them without her concurrence, or that the energy which they would insist upon for the protection of their property in American vessels would be unnecessary, if it were efficaciously employed in giving security to the navigation of their own flag. It may be mentioned here, that the American flag is not the only one for the honor of which these gentlemen have taken so deep and so generous a concern. They sometime since interested themselves in a similar manner for the honor of the Danish neutrality, until they were given to understand by the Count de Bernstorff that the government of Denmark was the proper judge of its own honor, and was not disposed to listen to instigations upon its concerns with other nations.

When I delivered to Mr. van Leyden[1] my letter to the Com-

[1] Frederik van Leyden, Secretary of the Committee for Foreign Affairs. See Adams, *Memoirs*, July 5, 1796.

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mittee, I asked him if he had any letters from Mr. van Polanen since his reception by the President. He answered that he had not. I observed that I had seen in the American papers a paragraph announcing that he had been received. "We have had no dispatches from him," said Mr. van Leyden, "for some time. Probably he has written and sent them, but there is so little regard paid to your flag, that the English may have taken the dispatches from the vessels on board of which they were. If the United States wish sincerely to establish the principles of making neutral vessels protect enemy's property, they have now a good opportunity to insist upon it with Great Britain, now that Spain has entered into the war." "The United States," I answered, "are very sincerely desirous of establishing the principle, and I have no doubt will readily use all pacific means to promote it. But they think it not an object that warrants going to war. They could contribute little towards putting it into execution. They might in a war obtain possession of Canada, but it would afford no gain at all to them, and a very trifling loss to Great Britain. Since the delivery of the posts, the British government probably set no great value themselves upon these possessions, and their governors, Lord Dorchester and Simcoe, are both returning home. But at sea what assistance could we give you without a navy?" Why, that is true, replied he, but I am surprised that the United States do not turn their attention to their marine; they have certainly the means of a naval power, and they must feel the necessity of having one for the protection of their commerce. The object, said I, is not forgotten, but the obligations contracted in the war which secured the independence of the United States are in their eyes the first and most imperious. In the course of that they necessarily contracted a very heavy debt, the punctual payments

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of which absorb all the revenues which can be raised upon the convenience of the people. But, said Mr. van Leyden, they have paid part of the capital of that debt, so that the burthen is reduced. Part of the capital is paid, said I, but larger sums of it become payable every year, so that the *present burthen* continues to increase, although every payment serves to diminish the whole mass of the weight. For instance, a very large proportion of this debt is due in this country, and being paid with constant punctuality, your citizens receive at this day several millions annually paid by the government of the United States. There is now a million of capital, also, that becomes payable every year; in the course of two or three years the capital annually payable will increase to two or three millions. To these demands successively rising the United States are liable by their contracts, and you are sensible that they cannot think of averting the sums destined for the punctual performance of these engagements to any other object, however desirable. They think it better, therefore, even to postpone that of a marine. He said that to be sure, the sums appropriated to the discharge of debts could not properly be employed to another use, but that it was to be wished that Great Britain might be compelled to consent to making a peace, which should restore to this Republic all the possessions she had taken from it. He was afraid, however, that it would not be for the present, as the conferences between the French minister of Foreign Affairs and Lord Malmesbury were already suspended, though not absolutely broken off. That the latter had written for further instructions, but the settlement of the negotiations would be very uncertain, and little was to be expected from them.[1]

This opinion was doubtless well grounded, and concurs

[1] See Malmesbury, *Diaries and Correspondence*, III. 259.

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with the general opinion here. The official papers which have passed upon the subject of the negotiation hitherto have been published by the French Directory, and are contained in the *Gazette* which I have the honor to inclose by the present opportunity.[1]

I have the honor &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, November 13, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

I have successively received at due time your favors of the 20th and 28th ultimo, and of the 3rd instant, and renew my thanks for the interesting information they contain.

If the French government have determined upon the capture of enemy property on board of neutral vessels, I do not apprehend that we shall suffer materially from the resolution. It will, however, serve to show the degree of regard in which they hold, not only the rights of neutral nations,

[1] "I have already taken the liberty to suggest my idea of the inconveniences which must naturally follow the publication of such letters as mine to you of 4 November last. That in this particular instance it will expose me personally to the strong resentment of the Batavian Committee for Foreign Affairs, and to the whole party of the present government in that country, is very certain, and I sincerely regret the circumstance, as I had just parted from them leaving them perfectly good humored, and as they had always been very obliging to me, and had shown in every instance a disposition as friendly as they could venture to the United States. As far, however, as it only concerns myself the ill-will of the Dutch government will be less important now, than it would be were I still residing in that country; and as I felt bound in duty to write the letters, I shall cheerfully acquiesce in any consequence that must derive from them." *To the Secretary of State*, July 19, 1797. Ms.

"As to their complaint at Philadelphia, their assertion that they are independent, etc., it gives me much concern that they should have taken offence. I meant it not, nor was my letter to the Secretary written with an idea that it would ever be published. Their note to me, however, which gave occasion to my comment, was in its tenor highly offensive to the American government. They knew perfectly

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but their own engagements. There are people in America who to serve certain purposes are forever harping upon the gratitude which they pretend the United States owe to France, and the French themselves are not unfrequently disposed to make a merit of what was certainly a very interested policy. The present government are perhaps disposed to cancel our supposed obligations by violating the stipulations of their treaties. It is my opinion that there is a strong debt of *reciprocal* obligations between the United States and France, or rather, to speak the only honest language upon a political concern, the relations between the two nations were formed upon a very important *common interest* which still exists, and must continue long to exist. That common interest prescribes a cordial harmony and a punctual performance of treaties on both sides. The American government is unquestionably and sincerely disposed to cultivate that harmony and faithfully to adhere to its engagements, but it expects a similar return; and I am persuaded that if the French propose to themselves an influence in America by the assumption of a supercilious tone of negotiation, or by disregarding their stipulations, they will fail of success and lose much of the influence which they actually possess.

The Minister Delacroix[1] means not well to the harmony of the two countries, and there are prejudices and passions of other individuals which will labor to interrupt the good

well that it was so, and in my answer to themselves at the time, I had not disguised my opinion upon the subject. As I believed notwithstanding that their disposition towards us was good, I attributed their offensive note to *instigation* from France. I had express information that such was the fact. It has since then been confirmed to me from unquestionable authority. The member knows it to be true. Perhaps their resentment now is prompted by the same instigation." *To William Vans Murray*, November 18, 1797. Ms. See also the letter to Murray, November 24, 1797.

[1] Charles Delacroix de Constant (1741–1805).

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understanding, which the interest of both requires. But I am persuaded it will eventually be restored, because the mutual interest is too strong and must prevail over all the efforts of prejudice, passion, or intrigue.

There is a great ignorance of the character and sentiments of the American people in France among those who imagine that any manœuvre of *theirs* could turn an election against the President of the United States. Their invectives and their calumnies may add a few more to the number of his detractors, or take away some who admired him from fashion or from personal motives; but among the great mass of the people he stands fixed as the foundations of the world, and France will find it more easy to go through five and twenty revolutions at home, than to root out that man's merits and services from the memory of Americans, or a proper sense of them from their hearts.

It is probable, however, that if the President persists in his intention to retire, the French will soon forget their political resentment against him. As to his system of policy they will do well to acquiesce in that, for they will not overturn it. You think they will endeavor to promote the election of Mr. Jefferson, and you are probably right; but if Jefferson is elected, I speak with confidence in saying that he will inflexibly pursue the same general system of policy which is now established. Perhaps even you may smile and hesitate in believing this prophecy. I *may* be mistaken, but have no doubt myself upon the subject, and am willing to have my conjectures judged by the test of events.

Our friends, therefore, *must* return upon their steps, unless they are determined to cast off a sincere and faithful and *very useful* friend. As to their being discovered, that is, their motives and their views, I suppose they do not expect to avoid that. They must know that they *have been long*

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since discovered. Their islands and their marine are strong ties. The weariness of their people at the war which yet burthens them, the total want even of a plausible pretext to quarrel with America, and the very possible chance that they may again be in want of our bread, will prolong our peace, and if the Minister Delacroix is succeeded by an abler or a wiser man, he will feel the advantage of preserving influence by using it with moderation.[1]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, November 25, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received yesterday your favor of August 7, the first time I have had the pleasure of a letter from you since the same date. I have also to acknowledge an unusual interval since my last to you was written. I shall not plead in excuse that a very considerable American correspondence, which I find myself obliged to furnish altogether on my part with few returns of any kind, and those few containing little more than acknowledgments of my letters having been

[1] "I understand that Mr. Monroe has received his recall. General Pinckney has not yet arrived. Mr. Adet also has probably his recall before this time. It was sent more than two months ago, as you have doubtless been informed ere this from France. A successor is not yet appointed. Various motives may be conjectured as the occasion of a measure, which implies a coolness of disposition, which will not probably last any great length of time, and which may perhaps not be spontaneous in the minds of the Directory. The character of the French minister for foreign affairs [Delacroix] is probably known to you. His conduct upon an occasion which has been a subject of particular observation in Europe, and his avowed preference of the minority in the American House of Representatives, discover his purposes and what is to be expected from him. The policy of the French government may be unfavorable to all neutral nations, but it may be safely concluded that they do not wish to be at positive variance with the United States, and will

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received, becomes gradually more burthensome, and that I postpone insensibly from day to day the writing of those which can admit of postponement. However justly I might make this apology, I am sensible it would not be sufficient. Continual attention to many inattentive correspondents is possible; it is, therefore, a duty; and of all my inofficial correspondents it is most inexcusable that I should have occasion for an apology to you. I shall endeavor to avoid the same fault in future. . . .

The inconveniences of a foreign mission which have been mentioned in several of your late letters are certainly great. I was not insensible of them when I left my country. There is another, greater than all the rest, of which I am equally sensible. It is that of losing the prospects of a profession, and of being displaced from one's proper station in society. A premature elevation renders a subsequent descent inevitable. All my prospects in America are that I shall have the advantage of reflecting upon what I have been. There is, however, one article of my philosophy, which I do not apprehend will soon abandon me. It is an indifference to the pursuits of ambition and fame, which even your solicitude for me does not altogether remove. I sought not the station which I now hold. I sought not my late errand to England, nor the new appointment to Portugal with which

return to their customary civility after they shall discover the issue of their present experiment." *To the Secretary of State*, November 16, 1796. Ms.

It was held by the administration that Monroe had neglected to make a full and proper use of the material sent to him to lessen or remove the great uneasiness of the French government in its relations to the United States. This material had reached him early in December, 1795; yet he remained silent and made no use of it until the middle of February, 1796, when Delacroix announced the intention of sending an envoy extraordinary to the United States. This Monroe sought to prevent, and an interchange of complaint and reply resulting in nothing satisfactory by May, the President in July, at which time the May despatches were received, determined to recall Monroe.

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I have been honored. Did I ever wish for them? Not for the English business I think you will readily believe. No. Nor for either of the others. When this service shall be sufficiently discharged I can retire perfectly contented to my books and to silent obscurity; but to the tedious drudgery of the bar, to an office without clients, or to invidious labor and its wretched pittance of retribution, while my juniors during my absence will not only have gained upon me all my advancement, but left me far behind them, to tug again at the oar while they enjoy the favors of the gale and stream at once — I will not pretend that I shall readily acquiesce in such a course as that. The first and most strenuous of my endeavors will be to preserve my independence entire. Rather than surrender or impair that, I shall submit to anything not dishonest or dishonorable; but that preserved, I shall indulge my own inclinations, and adopt a mode of life which will allow me leisure for my favorite pursuits and literary studies. Such is at present my hope. If I can return to *leisure* I am determined that it shall not be to idleness. But the Americans have in Europe a sad reputation on the article of literature, and I shall purpose to render a service to my country by devoting to it the remainder of my life.

In one of your late letters you inquire, whether in my peregrinations I can find nothing for the University at Cambridge, or for the Academy.[1] I do not mean to be forgetful of either, especially the former, to which I am personally indebted for much valuable instruction. Perhaps I might have been more in haste to offer a tribute of my regard and veneration to these institutions, but for a profound aversion in my mind against ambitious donations and begging pres-

[1] American Academy of Arts and Sciences, of which he was elected a member August 23, 1797.

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ents. If you will answer for it, that in case I should find something for these institutions they will not consider it as a solicitation of their favors, and that they will not confer them upon me, I shall be the more ready to indulge my inclination of showing the respect for them which I really feel. You will perhaps think there is too much of pride in the composition of these scruples; but having before me your example of literary honors acquired, not by the little artifices of courting notice, but by strong and substantial merits commanding it, I am more disposed to follow that example than depart from it for the sake of an academical degree or fellowship.

Before this letter reaches you the elections for President and Vice President will be completed, and it will doubtless decide as to your continuance in the public service. The President's address to the people of the United States of September 17, arrived here some time since. I imagine it will be translated and published in the papers of the country. There are perhaps some characters here who do not perfectly relish it; the observations upon the absurdity of having any *favorite* foreign nation are applicable to other countries, as well as to the United States. Their justice is pointedly felt here, and several persons have mentioned to me the address in terms of the highest satisfaction. But the foreign nation here is something more than a favorite, and it requires a degree of courage by no means universal even to *profess* any sentiments of independence. Upon which subject you may judge from the following anecdote. Some days before the Constitution now before the National Assembly was reported by the Committee, I was witness to a conversation which took place concerning it between the French Minister Plenipotentiary, whose name is Noël, and several members of the Assembly and of the Diplomatic

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Committee. All declared themselves very anxious and curious to know what it would be. Noël at length said he had heard that it would not establish the principle of unity and indivisibility. That there would only be nine departments instead of nine provinces. That in his opinion that would be a great and pernicious departure from the example which France had shewn them, in totally dissolving every principle of federalism, and for his part that he could not approve such an heterogeneous system. He was proceeding to give further tokens of his dissatisfaction in the same tone, when a member of the Assembly and Committee,[1] one of the most noted and influential men in the present government, interrupts him with a smile, "Diable, comme vous y allez." Noël then checking himself says: "Au reste, what I say is only the opinion of the citizen Noël; as to the Minister, to be sure he will find everything that you choose to do excellent. Remember it was only the Citizen Noël that was speaking and not the Minister." "Sans doute," replied the honest Dutchman, "autrement vous sentez bien *que je me tairois*." The subject of conversation was then changed. But afterwards, since the Constitution has been reported, the member who so candidly confessed that the voice of the Minister would silence him, of course found his tongue to declare that the Constitution is fundamentally bad, not fit even to be made a subject of deliberation, a monster, a federalism, just so far contrary to the rights of men and citizens as it varies from the glorious precedent of France.

The Constitution is not yet published, nor have the Assembly determined as yet whether they will debate it at all. This decision is to be made to-morrow. I will write you more about it in the course of a few days. At present I can only say that it abandons in great measure, but without

[1] Hahn. The incident is related in Adams, *Memoirs*, November 4, 1796.

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sacrificing entirely, the federal principle. The legislature is to be in two branches; the executive, in a council of state consisting of seven members; the council of state to have a qualified negative upon the laws, adopted from our Constitution. In my next I shall also enter more largely upon the political state of European affairs in general. The campaign may soon close, and leave the parties nearly where they were when it began. There will be during the winter much negotiation, from which the only ground I have to think it possible that a general pacification will ensue is, that everybody says it will not.[1]

I remain &c.

[1] On March 15, 1796, a committee of twenty-one was appointed to prepare and report within six months after appointment the plan of a constitution. The debates were long and developed a difference of interest on the matter of union. The preponderance of Holland favored a dissolution of the federal union for the purpose of consolidating all the provinces into one Republic. The French also favored this issue, because it was easier to manage one body than eight or ten. The words and phrases of the day came from France, and "unity" and "indivisibility" exercised a spell in the proceedings of this Committee. Those who desired to preserve some part of provincial sovereignty found themselves in a minority. The very name of federalism was in disgrace, and the example of the United States went for nought on the ground that the personal character and influence of Washington gave it the appearance of success. After sitting for five months without producing the expected Constitution the Assembly received a note from Noël, the French minister, urging them speedy adoption of a constitution founded upon the principle of unity and indivisibility, evidently dictated by the Directory at Paris, and intended to serve as an urgent intimation of what was expected by that body. The Committee reported November 10, 1796, and a member of the Committee made his protest against it, and declared his determination to oppose it at every stage, because it was not founded upon a principle of unlimited unity and indivisibility. To reject it at that time, as the Assembly wished, would under the law have led to enlarging the Committee, reporting another constitution, and submitting both to the people. To defeat that necessity the Assembly voted to accept the reported plan as the groundwork of their debates, but refused to debate anything that was not founded upon the indivisibility of the republic. A new committee was named to make the necessary alterations in the paper thus condemned.

"I have informed you heretofore how cavalierly the constitution lately pro-

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TO JOHAN LUZAC

THE HAGUE, November 25, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have just read in the supplement to the *Leyden Gazette* of this morning, under the extract of the news from London, an article which says that General Washington had been induced, from disgust at the ingratitude with which his services have been recently paid, to retire from his eminent station, and to request in a discourse pronounced on the 17th of September, that his fellow citizens would not continue him in his high office at the next election.

I shall not examine the inducement which *Englishmen* may have to impute motives to General Washington unworthy of his character, or to attribute ingratitude for public services to the Americans. But my regard for my country and for its brightest ornament makes me anxiously desirous that no aspersion cast upon them should remain in the minds of our *friends*.

duced here has been treated, and the appointment of a new committee to draw up another. There was an inconsistency in the two decrees of the National Assembly, the first, accepting the plan proposed as a groundwork for deliberation; and the second passed six days afterwards, and setting it altogether aside, at which some people have had the weakness to be surprised. But in order to remove all doubts, not only of the cause but of the manner whereby the alteration was effected, two members of the Assembly have published an address to the Batavian people, declaring that they were the persons who brought it to pass. That when they found a constitution brought to light infected with the venom of federalism and calculated only to call back the Stadtholder and slavery; that this constitution was *favored by a great majority of the Assembly;* and that their hapless country was upon the point of receiving the *coup-de-grace*, they united themselves with a *very small number* of friends to liberty, and the next moment stepped into a carriage, went to Paris, and deposited their well-grounded apprehensions in the bosom of the French government. The consequences they add are apparent; federalism finds its six months' labor fruitless, the haters of liberty, spite of the thousand masks under which they strive to conceal their detested faces, will be crushed, and *Netherland will be free.* Such is the mode of debating constitutions here." *To John Adams*, December 24, 1796. Ms.

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I hope in the course of a few days to send you the address of the President to the people of the United States, dated and published (not pronounced) on the 17th of September. You will judge from the paper itself whether the disgust or the ingratitude, which some Englishmen are always ready to discover, because they would be glad to find them in the United States of America, were the motives for the retirement from the Chief Magistracy of the American Union. I flatter myself on the contrary, that you will find his inducements more consistent with the dignity of his character, and with the honor and justice of the American people. At the same time I am sure you will concur in the opinion that it is one of the most interesting papers as a public document, and in every respect worthy of one whose life has been one continued benefaction to his country. I know not whether it can conveniently be inserted in a translation at full length in the *Leyden Gazette;* but I am persuaded that your brother will have the goodness to correct the impression which an imputation, injurious both to the President and people of the United States, would leave on the public mind in Europe. The reasons assigned by the President himself for declining to be viewed as a candidate for the approaching election are his time of life, his strong inclinations towards a retired life, and the peaceable, calm and prosperous state of affairs in that country, which permit him to retire without apprehending any essential detriment to the public service. At the same time he bears a testimony equally just and honorable to his fellow citizens, for the steady, constant and invariable confidence with which they have always supported him and rewarded his exertions in their service. I mention these circumstances with the more readiness, because I am sure you will be gratified to know that the imputation of disgust to General Washington, and

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of ingratitude to the Americans, is merely the calumny of English spirits beholding the felicity of the Americans, as Satan is represented beholding that of our first parents in the garden of Eden.[1]

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM CRANCH

THE HAGUE, November 29, 1796.

MY DEAR FRIEND:

. . . . . .

In this country they are chiefly busied in preparing a Constitution for the Batavian Republic. They appear to be tired of Federalism, and insist upon having a government, one and indivisible. Such at least is the clamor of those to whom the privilege of speech is allowed. A great majority of the people are, however, in their hearts strongly attached to the federal government under which they have always lived. I have had an opportunity during my residence here to observe the practice, as well as the theory, of the new political religion, which for some years past has been everywhere preached with so much fanaticism. Very soon after my arrival here a revolution was effected with the help of the French army. The new comers, who seized under their patronage the administration of affairs, began with a formal and solemn declaration of the rights of man and citizens, according to the most recent, amended, corrected,

[1] "Mr. Monroe, I have been informed, is very much incensed at his recall. I presume you have had occasion to observe the menacing tone which is attributed by some to the intentions of the French government. I hope and persuade myself that General Pinckney will be as far from encouraging or provoking any such disposition as his predecessor has been. I have been often assured, that Mr. Monroe enjoyed very highly the confidence of the Directory; that he had great personal influence with them, and was exceedingly beloved." *To Rufus King*, November 26, 1796. MS.

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and purified French edition of that day. My honest Dutch people, who had always enjoyed a great portion of habitual freedom without thinking of its being rested upon mere metaphysical abstraction, were perfectly astonished to hear what an abundance more of their rights existed, of which they had always been deprived, and had not even ever thought. At the same time they were told that they had always been taxed beyond all toleration, which was indeed not far from the truth, and that they should soon find themselves relieved, and see how much cheaper a true rights-of-man government is than a tyrannical, aristocratical, federal despotism such as they had been used to. The declaration of rights was not dry from the press, when two of the most eminent and popular characters who had been concerned in the preceding government, were arrested and imprisoned, their papers seized and examined. From that day to this no charge or accusation has ever been brought against them, although they have repeatedly reclaimed either a trial or their freedom. They are still confined, and if any one inquires why they are not tried, the rights-of-man gentry answer with perfect coolness, that the reason is, because no proofs can be produced against them of any crime whatever, and that if they were tried they must be acquitted and discharged. So much for the rights of man. The legislative assembly of one of the provinces passes a law. A French general, sword-by-side, marches into the Hall, accosts the President of the Assembly, and tells him that the law must be repealed, for that it shall not be executed. The Assembly puts itself into a great passion, talks of liberty and equality, federalism and indivisibility, rings all the commonplace changes of patriotism and independence, bitterly complains, inveighs, threatens, and last of all submits. So much for the rights of citizens. An unlimited freedom of the press

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is proclaimed as an unalienable right. The printer of a newspaper inserts an article of news which does not perfectly suit the taste of the ruling powers. By an executive order, without further proof, he is silenced and his paper suspended for six weeks, two months, or such other term as those who signify the order deem proper. So much for the liberty of the press. In the meantime the taxes have been accumulated beyond all former example. Forced loans, delivery of gold and silver plate, contributions proportioned now upon the capital, now upon the income, of every individual, soldiers quartered upon the citizens, &c., &c., &c., furnish comment upon comment, to explain the true and substantial meaning affixed to the new code of the rights of man, by those who publish it with the loudest emphasis.

I remain &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

AMSTERDAM, December 2, 1796.

DEAR SIR:

On the 29th ultimo I received your favor of the 22nd, which I have not answered before, as the next morning I left the Hague intending to pass a few days here. In speaking so confidently as I did in my last letter as to the policy which Mr. Jefferson will pursue, if placed at the head of our Union, I did not speak from any direct information, or indeed from any other source than my general opinion of his character, and my firm conviction that he could not pursue any other. There is but one variation in the material policy of the American government which could be attempted, and that is a variation from a neutral system to a warlike one. Our friends, as you call them, will no doubt urge this as they have done hitherto, or perhaps more incautiously still. But they deceive themselves in imagining that there is a great part

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of the people in America inclined to become a party in the war. The immense majority of the people is determined upon the preservation of peace, and would very soon show the most pointed disapprobation of any measure on the part of the executive tending towards a different direction. If the advisers whom you justly apprehend should prevail to the adoption of any important change of system, the popular voice and opinion would soon correct their influence. There would therefore be a firmness of necessity, which would prevent any essential evil consequences from a facility of character, which I think with you is indubitable. As to any little variations of detail or of parade, I do not take them at all into the account. With respect to France, Mr. Jefferson would undoubtedly do everything to conciliate and harmonize, that the justice and honor of the United States would permit. Has not the same thing been invariably practised by the present President? If more is expected, or required; if the unquestionable rights and substantial interests of the American people are demanded as a sacrifice to the humors or the ambitious purposes of whomsoever, Mr. Jefferson is not the man who will make himself the instrument of any such designs. This is an opinion so strongly fixed in my mind, that I have no doubt whatever upon the subject. If I should ever find that this judgment is erroneous, I shall be no less surprised than grieved at the proof.

I am glad to hear that Mr. Pinckney has arrived at Bordeaux and am anxious to hear what his reception will be at Paris.[1]

[1] "Mr. Pinckney, our ambassador here, is arrived at Bordeaux after a fifty day passage. I have had some anxieties as to his manner of reception here. I have been at no small pains to enlighten our friends here on the character and politics of the man, on republican rotation, on their changes in America, and every other argument to convince them, they neither had cause nor right for preferring the present to the future, nor him to a successor. An address was set on foot here to Mr. Monroe, thanking him for services, and regretting his recall. It appeared to me

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I had heard before receiving your letter that Mr. Monroe was highly incensed at his recall, and that the reception of his successor was to be questioned.[1] Mr. Monroe's conduct in refusing to receive an address, dictated not by regard for him but by hostility to the government, is altogether honorable to him.[2] I most cordially hope that he has recognized the character and views of those who have advised him with sentiments so deeply hostile to the American government. As to our friends I do not imagine that they will scruple the right of our government to recall any of their ministers abroad, whenever the executive thinks proper. If so clear a right as that could be contested, what one attribute of independence would there be beyond the reach of similar scruples? I presume that the disposition of Mr. Pinckney is not less friendly to the French Republic and its government than that of his predecessor, and I hope that disposition will meet with a return equally friendly.[3]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

made to injure Mr. P[inckney], and to censure our government. I therefore refused. Mr. M[onroe] would not accept the address, and I think has been awakened by that and some other circumstances, to reconnoitre the dangerous ground on which he stood, and had been placed by people, less attached to him than hostile to the members of our government. And I now have no doubt he will behave to Mr. P[inckney] and to his mission as both demand of him, and as a virtuous American will hurry to display, who from some prejudice and bad advice may have done wrong by mistake, but who will repair it by good done with design." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Paris, November 22, 1796. Ms.

[1] It was known at Paris late in the afternoon of December 12, that the Directory would not receive Pinckney.

[2] "Some of the Americans at Paris drew up and signed an address to Mr. Monroe, expressive of their thanks for his services and regret at his recall; others refused to sign it, and Mr. Monroe himself, aware of the real design which was proposed by this address, refused to receive it. He is, however, as I have heard, very much offended at his recall." *To David Humphreys*, December 10, 1796. The letters on the proposed address are in Monroe, *View of the Conduct of the Executive*, 399.

[3] "I have since seen Mr. Pinckney. From what I can learn the motives are

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TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

THE HAGUE, December 15, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

It must have been from some inaccuracy of expression on my part in my letter of the day before yesterday, that you conceived as a symptom of distrust, what I really intended as a mark of confidence. Nothing could be further from my design, than to wound your sensibility, or to intimate the most distant suspicion of your purest integrity. I considered that by far the most effectual and the only infallible criterion of confidence shown or discovered, rests upon the proof of fact, and thought that my former application to you, and the repetition of it for my present occasion, was a testimony of my confidence stronger than would result from any declaration. It was my wish at the same time to show the government the most reasonable terms upon which their business could be transacted, and to give you a full knowledge of this intention. The government do not wish to have their business done *gratis*, nor is it my desire to give any one trouble on their account without an adequate compensation. I thought I had shown this disposition also in agreeing at the first moment to every charge which you

that our treaty with England annulls the one with France; that considering no minister useful in America they had recalled Adet, and consequently none could be wanted here. As the recall of Adet went from this in August, Mr. P[inckney] thinks some step might be taken by our government which he ought to wait, as the delay cannot be long. I think he judges wisely; had that not been the case he says he would have instantly returned to America. He appears to me a very respectable and well informed man." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Paris, December 15, 1796. Ms. A correspondent wrote to Bourne: "Our minister is *refused* and *will be* [sent back?]; so you Aristocrats will have some cause to grumble. We Jacobins — are as proud as peacocks about it." The intimation was given to Monroe, no notice being taken of Pinckney's letter, lest it should be construed into some sort of acknowledgment.

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mentioned to me as customary in transactions of this nature, even to one which you afterwards retrenched, because there are merchants, who are not in the habit of making it. In the whole affair I thought my conduct would prove to you at once my confidence in you, and my full determination that you should be fairly and liberally paid for your pains.

As to the charge which you observe is no more than what is customary for the *receipt and payment* of monies, I shall not deny that I thought there was another. I did not imagine that 6/10 per cent upon large sums of money was a customary charge for merely receiving and paying monies. Indeed, I had considered the guilder in the thousand as representing that charge, and had supposed that it was the usual and regular per centum allowed on all large transactions, for the special charge of receiving and paying. The idea was perhaps the more strongly impressed in my mind from the common, habitual practice I am in of drawing for my own use very small sums at a charge of one-fourth per cent. But I have mentioned what I hope will apologize with you, both for any want of information and for misinformation upon the subject of commercial business, that I have never had but little practical knowledge of it. It is for the correction of such inaccuracies in my own estimates, that I requested the benefit of information from you, and I was the more persuaded that you would always give it me, as you had already given it in the relinquishment of one charge to which I had consented, and when you were under no obligation to do it. I hope that this explanation will be satisfactory to convince you that I did not feel or intend to express, either a want of proper confidence in you, or a desire that you should do any business at my application gratis.

If Mr. Coster is disposed to supply the remainder of the money at the former terms, I shall be content to take it;

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but at a time when the exchange in America upon this country is several per cent below par, I have no idea of selling bills upon the Treasury here at a discount. I had rather wait or make an attempt elsewhere.

I do not thoroughly understand what is meant by an intention to reimburse the capital of our public debt hypothecated to individuals, nor who is meant by certain capitalists. The United States have no debt hypothecated to individuals in this country. As to the speculations between individual and individual upon the hypothecation of our stocks, it is a subject with which the government have no concern. I trust that no person employed by the government has ever intimated or encouraged an idea that a change of administration in America would involve it in the European war; and as to what other capitalists may raise of scarecrow stories, they will always rest upon such false and flimsy foundations that I do not apprehend any material ill effects from them, though I think it the duty of every true American, and of every person well disposed towards the United States, to counteract as far as he is able the evil tendency of such designs.[1]

I am &c.

[1] "I thank you for the loan of the English paper containing the silly paragraph, from which was taken the extract in the Rotterdam Gazette. Mere *opinions* about American affairs, taken from English newspapers, are almost always false, and always partial against America. In this instance your own intelligence of a later date shows that the letter from New York, real or pretended, is an impudent falsehood. All my accounts to the 25th of October agree that all was in profound tranquility throughout America. I think the gazetteer at Rotterdam ought to insert a paragraph to correct the false impression made by the former." *To J. Beeldemaker*, December 21, 1796.

"By a letter which I have from Colonel Humphreys of November 14 I think it most probable that you will not think proper to order my removal before the ensuing summer, and I beg leave to suggest that the public interest will best be served if the person, who may be appointed to take my place here, should come before my

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TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

THE HAGUE, December 22, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I hope you will forgive me when I acknowledge that I could not read without smiling your letter of yesterday. It discovers such a lively trepidation at an event very inferior in point of importance to many others which have befallen the American government and people, without proving their total ruin.[1]

That the measure and its intention are profoundly wicked, profoundly hostile to the United States and their government, I fully concur with you in opinion. That it calls for the serious attention of their friends and citizens, that it may in its consequences call for the exertion of their energetic qualities, particularly for their fortitude, is very apparent. But, my dear Sir, believe me, our country is not totally destitute of such qualities; we have not shown ourselves fools or cowards, when former occasions have tried our spirits, nor have I the smallest suspicion that we shall on the present.

You dread the influence of frothy newspaper declamations, and of party spirit and heats encouraged by this example

departure. Indeed I take the liberty of observing that this would be advantageous as a general rule in all the changes of the persons employed in foreign missions. It has two circumstances of weight to recommend it. The first that it serves very much to facilitate the introduction of the new comer to the affairs of his mission, and to the means of conducting them; and the second, that it tends to preserve the good will of the Government to which the minister is sent. I suffered many inconveniences upon my first arrival here on account of the interval which had elapsed since the departure of my predecessor, both from the disposition that I found in the Government and from want of acquaintance with the persons and things with which I was to be conversant. Yet I had in this respect the benefit of some former knowledge of the country, and was therefore not entirely new to it." *To the Secretary of State*, December 14, 1796. Ms.

[1] The letter referred to the announcement that all relations between the Republic of France and the United States had ceased.

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of foreign interference. I see their activity and their malignancy no less clearly than yourself, but not with quite so much apprehension. Suppose its effects should be to turn the election? This is probably one of its principal objects, but should it succeed, what then? Is the devil to be raised, or are we to be set all by the ears for having a Virginian instead of a New England man for President? One honest and able man instead of another? Indeed these ideas may pass among Europeans, but they are not worthy of an American.

That the United States, and especially their government, have many enemies, you are not at this day to be told. That those enemies will do their worst, both in secret intrigue and open action, your own reflection will readily convince you. But remember, that they have virtues too, which have already defeated many an intrigue and successfully resisted many an action; and do not, with their European detractors, think our country must upon every momentous occurrence discover the improvidence or the weakness of a child.

You have now as you requested the state of my hopes and fears on this business. I fear (or rather I do not fear, I *know*) that faction in America will make of its French patronage the most that it possibly can. I hope (or rather I have no doubt), but that the justice, the virtue, and the spirit of the American people and government will prove triumphant over the patronage, as well as over the spirit of faction; and as to the decision upon the presidential election, I am not alarmed about it at all, but have the most unequivocal confidence, that in either of the probable alternatives, the chief magistracy of the Union will be administered with wisdom and integrity, with moderation and spirit, equal to every exigency to which it may be exposed. . . .

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TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, December 22, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have been for several days expecting with much anxiety to hear from you, when this morning I received at once your two favors of the 13th and 15th instants. The refusal of the French Directory to receive Mr. Pinckney has been reported here in different ways, and some have pretended that it was accompanied with a declaration personally favorable to Mr. Monroe. I most sincerely regret that they have taken this step, and hope and trust that it will be received by the American people as you expect, perfectly concurring in all your sentiments on the occasion. I have long seen with pain that the good understanding between the governments was affected by representations perfidious to both nations in their origin and disguised in their design. I still hope that candor and moderation, true patriotism and a truly friendly spirit, will repair the breach that threatens. I most cordially wish to France the just and rational benefits of her contest. I wish with equal sincerity a cordial harmony between her government and that of the United States; but if it must be paid for at such terms as have been extorted from some others, I believe that a change of the whole American people as well as of its government must first be effected.

I am glad to find that Mr. Pinckney determines to wait for the measures of the government upon the recall of Mr. Adet, and I perceive with much satisfaction the personal opinion you entertain of him. His present situation no doubt is unpleasant to him, but the mortification is that of our government, it is that of our country; and I hope he will be persuaded that every true American will share it

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with him, and consider that he was subjected to it in the cause common to all.

With regard to Mr. Monroe, it is my wish and hope, that he too will not choose to place his dependence upon a state of separation and opposition to the government which he has represented; that he has always been the Minister of United America, and not the minister of particular interests and opinions. The present circumstances make it impossible not to consider this as a question, which is only to be decided by his future conduct.

The motives which you mention to have been alleged by the Directory for their refusal are, that the treaty with Great Britain annuls that with France. But can you inform me whether anything more specific is pretended, or whether any instance is designated, in which the American government has violated *any* stipulation of the French treaty? In that with Britain, you know there is an *express* stipulation that nothing in it shall be construed to operate against the previous engagements of either party. Is it intimated that we have ever given it a construction opposite to this special provision? That the Directory have recalled their Minister Adet, and do not judge it useful to send or to receive a minister from America, is an indication of their *will*, but it is not a reason, nor a ground of complaint. My only anxiety is upon this point. If France has any substantial cause to suspend their diplomatic intercourse with the United States, it ought to be clearly stated. If the proceedings of her government rest merely upon *her* construction of a treaty made by *them* with another power, upon a construction directly contrary to the plain letter of that treaty, let it be known; let the American people judge for themselves, whether they will suffer any power upon earth to interfere between them and their solemn, lawful engagements.

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You will oblige me if you can with propriety let me know, in what light this measure of the Directory appears to be considered by the public opinion in Paris. *Here*, as far as I can judge, it does by no means meet with general approbation. I have understood that there are Americans in Paris who receive it with much exultation. Our government has indeed enemies enough, but for my own part I am fully confident that the result of this, like that of former events, will prove that it is not without true and resolute friends.

For the citizens of the United States and their property, which happens to be in the power of the French government, I feel indeed a considerable anxiety. But as I hope the hostility of their intentions is confined to the government, without extending to individual persons or property, I feel the less apprehensive on this account.

. . . . . .

TO W. & J. WILLINK AND N. & J. VAN STAPHORST & HUBBARD

THE HAGUE, December 22, 1796.

GENTLEMEN:

I have received in due time your letters of the 12th instant and of yesterday, and perceive with regret that you have not yet succeeded in obtaining the prolongation, for which I had consented to terms so highly favorable to the creditors. If your undertakings in the concerns of the United States are subject to be defeated by every idle fabrication of an English newspaper copied into a Rotterdam gazette, the American government may indeed well conclude the necessity of depending for their credit upon themselves. The paragraph which you mention was in all probability invented in England. The real intelligence from America of a later date

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countenances no such expectations of a dissolution of the American union, and I trust, gentlemen, that the course of events will soon show, that the American people can elect a President without involving themselves either in a civil or a foreign war. The apprehension of such consequences indicates a very imperfect knowledge of the American character and history. Such is my opinion; but if any of you gentlemen participate in the panic, which you observe has taken place with regard to the future prospects of the United States, permit me to recommend to you, not to contribute in spreading and augmenting it by divulging opinions which, however speculative when proceeding from you, have a tendency to impair the prices of the American funds in this country.

I have seen the accounts of the French Directory's having refused to receive Mr. Pinckney, but with no such declaration concerning Mr. Monroe as that which you mention. I believe that in this particular you have been misinformed.

It is not surprising that this circumstance should have affected the prices of the American funds here, but as in all probability it will not be followed by anything more important, I am persuaded the impression will be temporary, and the stocks will soon rise to their former level. Such fluctuations are to be regretted but cannot be prevented. . . .

I am Gentlemen, etc.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, December 24, 1796.

. . . . . .

I have mentioned that one of the motives of the French Directory in their late proceeding[1] is to influence the Ameri-

[1] The refusal to receive Pinckney.

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can election, or to embarrass the new administration. There is an opinion propagated with great zeal and industry in every part of Europe, that the union and prosperity of the United States are dependent altogether upon the personal character, merits, and popularity of the present President, and that the moment he shall retire from the government we shall fall into irreconcilable dissensions, which will soon be followed by a separation of the northern from the southern states. In England and France, perhaps among some people in this country, these ideas are not simple opinions; they have ripened into *hopes*. For whatever affections our countrymen may indulge in their hearts for this or that European nation, they may assure themselves that they are to all objects of fear and envy. The prosperity of the American people has become a reproach to the rulers of Europe, whether monarchical or republican, and prosperity generates envy among nations no less than among individuals. A paragraph has appeared in one of the late English newspapers, purporting to be founded on a letter from New York written in October, and announcing that troubles and confusions were expected to take place upon the approaching election for President; that the salutary advice of the present President's address to the people did not appear to have made any impression upon them; that in every State there was some particular favorite but no union, no public spirit; and that the division of the States would be the probable consequence of these symptoms. This account has been repeated in one of the gazette's here, and coming just at the same time with the hostile declaration of the French Directory, has gratified or alarmed all those who from sentiment or interest take any notice of our affairs. It has produced an effect upon the stocks, though I have endeavored as far as I have been able to counteract the impression. I have,

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indeed, no letters from which I can form any opinion whatever upon the state of our public affairs, and all my authentic intelligence is generally six weeks or two months older than that which is current among the merchants. . . .

I am &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, December 30, 1796.

MY DEAR SIR:

The inclosed extract of a letter from Paris which has been communicated to me contains certain paragraphs from the *Rédacteur*, a newspaper used by the French Directory for their official and non-official publications. It explicitly denies, you will observe, that the Directory have determined to suspend their intercourse with the government of the United States. It is among those paragraphs [1] which come from an official source without being encumbered with official responsibility. It serves to unfold more clearly the

[1] The paragraphs continued thus: "The personal complaints which one government may have to object against another cannot be a motive for a rupture between nations essentially allies and friends, and who having in *given times* a necessary influence upon the acts of their representatives, cannot delay reuniting together at the voice of a common interest.

"Assuredly the French are not insensible to the testimonies of affection and of interest which the great majority of the citizens of a state in the prosperity of which they cherish *their own work*, have given to their cause. They will never forget that notwithstanding the *unhappy suggestions*, it passed only by a plurality of two votes, that *fatal treaty* which has placed the Americans under the tutelage of the English, and which contrary to the faith of the Treaty of Alliance, which was to be the price and guarantee of their liberty, has granted to the commerce of the latter and to their military provisionings, advantages and facilities refused to France. They appeal to time, which will destroy all calumnies, to the reason of a people already fatigued with the new yoke of the English; they appeal in fine to their triumphs, which ought to dissipate the terrors of a pusillanimous policy, and silence the calculations of an interest ill-understood." This translation was sent in Adams' letter to the Secretary of State, of December 28, 1796.

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motives and expectations of the French government, as well as to corroborate the concert between them and the enemies to the government of the United States, which I have long seen forming, of which I have often given you my opinion, and the completion of which, as discovering itself in this transaction, was intimated to you in my last letter. How this concert was effected, and how far its future projects extend, I can easily conjecture, but it is not at present necessary to inquire. The present and immediate object of this measure is evident; to influence the choice of President in the United States, and if it cannot turn the election, to embarrass the new administration, and rally all its opponents under the standard of France. You see there is a pointed address to the *minority* of the House of Representatives, and an invitation to them whenever they can rise to a majority, to usurp upon the executive functions, and be sure of the support of France. The objections against "the fatal treaty which *passed* only by a majority of two votes," are all taken you see from the mouths of the American opposers to the government. The pretence that the treaty gives the British commercial advantages and facilities for their military provisionment denied to France, though stated in general terms for the sake if possible of eluding refutation, is in such direct opposition to truth, that it only serves to show that *no* scruple of morality can interpose an impediment in the political conduct of those who advance it. Yet they have not even the address or the countenance to dwell upon this article; it is the *British tutelage*, the *British yoke*, upon which they lay their principal stress. They appeal to the reason of our people and to their own triumphs, to dissipate the terrors of a pusillanimous policy; it is for our own sakes that they take all this generous concern in our welfare, and they contemplate *their own work* in our prosperity.

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And thus the American government is to abandon the solemn engagements of the United States, and involve them in an inevitable war, which must ruin their commerce, and check if not destroy their prosperity, because it suits the good will and pleasure of the French Directory, and because France, by sacrificing not only her commerce and prosperity, but millions of her own lives and all that can render life valuable to the remainder, has obtained some triumphs which are still very far from being secured.

The violation of the British treaty and a war with Britain, therefore, are what the French government wish to provoke. The House of Representatives is the instrument which they intend to use, and the Comte d'Avaux's policy, fear, the fear of their displeasure, the motive which they purpose to inspire. We shall see how they will succeed.

At the same time with this letter from Paris came the account that the Directory ordered Lord Malmesbury to withdraw within forty-eight hours.[1] They have not however ventured to break up the negotiation entirely, every circumstance contributes to prove that they wish to continue the war with Britain, but at the same time fear the wishes of their own people for peace. I send you the papers containing the last papers published in the course of the negotiation.[2] You will plainly see that they are determined to avoid a peace, *if they can.*

If when this and my late letters reach you, they find you still in the service of the public, I hope they may contribute

[1] December 19. Malmesbury was sent to Paris in October, with instructions to insist on the restoration of Belgium to Austria as a preliminary of peace. This condition was out of the question, and further, the Directory had on December 16 despatched a fleet from Brest to make a descent upon Ireland. To negotiate under that condition was not likely to lead to results tending to peace.

[2] See *Official Copies of the Correspondence of Lord Malmesbury and the Directory of France . . . relative to the Negotiations for Peace*, London, 1796.

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to give you some little information of utility. If you are not, they can do no harm. France in that case will have answered one purpose for herself and her party, though I fondly cherish the hope that even then, the ultimate objects of both will be disappointed.

Should you still hold a public station, it needs no observation on my part to convince you of the delicate situation in which the Government will be placed to preserve the firmness, the spirit, and the dignity, which must not be abandoned, and to avoid at the same time a rupture with France. There is but too much reason to suppose that the opposition party in America will provoke and negotiate such a rupture, rather than abandon their designs; they have acquired a footing too firm with the French government, and much caution, much prudence, much candor, and moderation will be necessary to counteract prepossessions which have been artfully instilled, and demonstrate interests which have been misrepresented. The friendship of France *may*, I have no doubt, be still recovered; but not by submission to her caprices, or by acquiescence in her exclusive preferences. A full, clear, and explicit denial of any commercial advantages or facilities of military provisionment to the British is indispensable; for, as this is the only color of a rational complaint that they have exhibited, it is necessary as it is easy to take it completely from them.

You will find by the papers that the expedition from Brest has sailed. Its destination is yet unknown.[1] The *amended*

[1] The expedition under Hoche, which left Brest December 16, to land troops in Ireland. A part of the fleet reached Bantry Bay, but a storm dispersed them, and they were forced to return without having accomplished anything.

"America is my country; there all my hopes and all my intentions center, and I know not of any misfortune that could befal myself personally, which I should consider more severe than that of being condemned to a constant residence in any part of Europe. The inclinations of my friends are perfectly coincident with

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Constitution was yesterday reported to the National Assembly here. The discussion is to begin next week.

Your dutiful son.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, January 10, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

The last post from Paris brought me your favor of the 31st ultimo. I think Mr. Pinckney's determination not to leave the post of his designation without a formal order perfectly proper. After what I have seen, there is no insult from the French government that could in any manner surprise or be unexpected. They are, indeed, determined to try the temper of the American people, and I hope that conviction will result from their experiment.

The address of Mr. Monroe to the President of the Directory and his answer have appeared in the French papers since the date of your last.[1] If it is possible to raise a pretension to national *superiority* on one part, and of national dependence on the other, in any words that language can

my own, and they have more than once intimated to me a wish to have me return home as speedily as possible. This is my own settled determination, which I shall effect whenever my duty to the public, and to your interest, will permit." *John Quincy Adams to Miss Louisa C. Johnson*, December 31, 1796. Ms.

[1] See Monroe, *View of the Conduct of the Executive*, 397. Barras was then President. "You will long ago have seen Mr. Monroe's address of leave, and the Directories answer. The first has appeared to the Americans generally agreeable, but the French say that no refusal of Mr. Pinckney discharged him of the duty to mention his mission. The reply is as yet without an advocate, intentionally dark, proud boastings, invidious assumptions, threats and offers of peace (without a war), mark high pretentions, schemes unripe, and angry minds. Their personal compliment to Mr. Monroe (if they wish him well) is equally misplaced; for it implies that he has advocated principles his government denied, or censured measures it has thought fit to pursue." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*; Paris, January 6, 1797. Ms.

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use, it is raised in the Director's [Barras] speech. According to him France would *abase* herself in discussing with America questions concerning the interest of both, and why? Because France is surrounded by a retinue of victories, and rich with the opulence of her allies. Is this the language of friendship? Is it a proper language even for justly offended friendship? Is it the language that a member of one government has a right to address to another independent government? Is it language that even in the bitterness and rancor of a deadly war they have used to their most inveterate enemy's government? No, it is the language of an assumed pretence of superiority, which the affectation of regard for the good people of America poorly countervails. The Director further pretends that the American people owe their liberty to France. The pretence is false and unjust. It rests upon a principle of dependence which the American people never would have submitted to.

The American people carried on for three years their struggle against Great Britain alone, and they were the three most trying and most dangerous years of the war. At the time when they solemnly declared their independence, when their Representatives in Congress pledged their lives, their fortunes, and their sacred honor in its support, France was so far from giving them any assistance, that the policy of her government was coolly settled to be, that the Americans should be compelled to return to subjection. Does the Directory think that the Americans have never seen the secret memorial of Mr. Turgot, from which this fact is established indisputably? Does the Directory forget the declaration of their own predecessors, the Executive Council; have they forgotten the declaration of their own national Convention, to the President of the United States, of that very national Convention from which they themselves have been selected,

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that the support, which the ancient Court of France lent them in the war for their independence, was merely the fruit of a base speculation ("n'était que le fruit d'une vile speculation")? Or have the Directory, with many other parts of the system pursued by the French monarchy, pursued that of Vergennes and Montmorin, "dans le tems même où ce *bon peuple* nous exprimait de la manière la plus touchante son amitié et sa reconnaissance." The President of the Directory has done more; for however mischievous the designs of Vergennes and Montmorin were against the United States, they never advanced a pretension that France *abased* herself in treating with them, or amicably discussing common concerns with their government. They never pretended that America owed her liberty to France. On the contrary, they formally disclaimed every idea both of *superiority* and *dependence*, and the Treaty of February 6, 1778, expressly declares, that the basis of the arrangements established between the two countries are the most perfect equality and reciprocity, avoiding all burdensome preferences as a source of dissensions, embarrassments, and discontents. The date of that treaty, more than nineteen months after the Americans had declared their independence, sufficiently shows that we never did depend upon France for our liberty. It was not until the Americans had proved, by compelling a British army of ten thousand men to surrender as prisoners of war, their ability to maintain their cause alone, that the *speculation* at the French Court changed its views, and they espoused a cause at the moment when they became convinced that it would sooner or later prevail, whether they espoused it or not.

I do not observe that the Paris papers, although they discuss most of the measures of the Directory, have taken the proper notice of this very strange speech of Barras. I wish

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that some opportunity might be found to introduce into some accredited journal some observations, similar to those I have here mentioned. The Directory affect to address themselves to the American *people*, in contradistinction to the government. I think that much good might be derived from a fair and moderate discussion, to enlighten the public opinion of France concerning the conduct of their Directory towards the United States. I think it impossible that the French people should be willing to support such conduct, or encourage such language, if the plain and simple story of truth were laid before them. As to the *foundation* of the tone of insult and menace assumed by the Directory, it still remains a secret to me, and I believe to the whole world. "The condescension of the American government for the suggestions of their ancient tyrants," is as vague, as unintelligible (I might say as *artistement obscur*), as the claim of superiority is unjust, and the pretence of dependence unsupported. You observe that the grievance must be, that the British are now admitted by treaty to a participation of *some* of the advantages possessed by the French. But our treaty with France expressly stipulates, that both parties shall reserve to themselves respectively the liberty to allow a participation at its own choice of all commercial advantages to other nations; and the treaty with Britain as expressly stipulates, that none of its articles shall be construed to militate with any previous engagement of either party. As for the right of selling prizes in our ports, without renewing discussions which must be interminable, upon a construction which, after all, each party must make within its own territories; if a difference of construction on this article is the substantial ground upon which a French Director undertakes to menace us with the victories and the riches of France, it should be publicly known.

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The article of the treaty should be given, and the substantial reasons assigned on each side to support its construction should be fairly stated. If those of the American government have been weak or captious, evasive or insincere, let them be shown to the world in their deformity, and then let the French Directory without *abasement* declare the consequences, and threaten the resentment of the rich and victorious Republic of France. But if riches or victories are considered as warranting the rejection of amicable discussion, the avowed claim of national superiority and the pretence of fastening upon us the shackles of dependence, I trust the Directory will in time discover that there are men who will resist usurpation and spurn at encroachment no less than themselves, and that the American government will no more submit to a modern than it ever yielded to an ancient tyrant.

I remain &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, January 13, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

Since I wrote you on the 10th instant I have received your obliging favor of the 6th, and find our sentiments perfectly concur upon the singular speech of the Director Barras to Mr. Monroe. What Mr. Monroe's opinion may be of personal compliments to him, coupled with scorn and indignity to his country and the Government which employed him, is not my business to inquire. I have hoped he would remember above all that he was an American, and as he boasts his military services against one nation, his hatred of which I believe nobody doubts, that he would not contribute to the servility of his own country towards another nation, however ardent his own attachment to its interests, or his

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inclination to gratify its will might be. It is very evident that the French government will do for him all that it can. I presume he is prepared to return the same for them. The Frenchmen who, as you observe, think he ought to have mentioned Mr. Pinckney's mission, do not perhaps reflect that it might have displeased the Directory. The reason is indeed not sufficient, but it might in that instance be effectual.

Your idea that the design is to produce a suspension of our trade with Great Britain is extremely probable, and it has been my settled opinion for many months; but it is not possible to convince France that, if the Americans must choose, their interest will necessarily compel them to take the British commerce with peace, in preference to the friendship of France and war. Cannot the Directory see, that if they will proceed in such a manner as they are now going on, they may drive America into alliance with their enemies; or is it the intention of the Directory to lose all the friends that France ever had? Do they think of nothing but stretching a string, without recollecting that beyond a certain tension it must break? Such indeed seem to be their prepossessions. I wish that time and further reflection may remove them.

The absurdity and inconsistency which you notice in the arguments for attacking Britain, now because she is too strong, and now too weak; at this moment, because her power is in the agonies of death, and at the next, because nothing less than a universal combination of the whole earth can resist it, is indeed glaring, and equally destitute of foundation in both extremes. The power of Britain is great, and deserves to be counteracted by the general and concurring policy of all commercial nations. I have no doubt of the universal disposition to promote this object, nor of the means which

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this disposition would willingly concert; but it is not by going to war for a freak of France to increase her territories and extend her conquests, that any nation will pursue its commercial interest; not by exposing commerce to immediate destruction, that its future protection is to be secured. France, it seems, wishes us to burn our barns, for fear of being robbed of their corn. No, it will never do. But the arguments which are used to prove the weakness of Britain are so far founded, that they may really tend to diminish the concern at her extraordinary naval power. The burthen of debt, the internal discontents, the character of the apparent successor to the Crown, and the state of society and manners in England, all serve to encourage the expectation, that if the island is left to itself, it will have other more urgent objects of pursuit than that of engrossing the whole commerce of the world. Let France undertake a general concert of maritime power by treaties made in peace, without intermingling the conquest of Belgium, and the frontier of the Rhine in the project, and she will not find it difficult to succeed. But then she must not insult those whom she wishes to persuade, nor talk of abasing herself by discussions with an independent nation.

Of Mr. Pinckney's reception for the present I have no expectation whatever, but, after what has happened, I shall not be surprised if the further indignity should be added of ordering him away. But I do not believe that the American government will appoint any other Minister. Mr. Pinckney's personal character is universally respected and beloved, as far as I have ever heard of it. His political sentiments are known to be as friendly to the harmony between the United States and France, as those of any man can be, as favorable to the interests of France, as is possibly consistent with his patriotism. If the Directory want more, it is not proper

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that they should be gratified, and certainly they cannot wish for less. I have not the most distant idea that Mr. Jefferson will yield in this point, more than any other man. . . .

I have letters from America of October 28. I presume that the recall of Adet had not then arrived. I observe that it has been denied from authority by the *Rédacteur*, that all communication was suspended between the governments of France and the United States. I feel a considerable confidence that good would result, if a true statement of the Directory's refusal of Mr. Pinckney and their total destitution of reasonable ground, or even pretext for it, were made known to the public. For as so flagrant an insult as that, with the speech of Barras, was scarcely ever offered to a free and independent nation, so *that* world ought to know, that there never was an insult more wanton or unprovoked. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, January 14, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received yesterday your favor of October 28, and it is by several weeks the latest letter that I have from America. It tells me that the elections were going on with as little bitterness as could be expected, and this in the present circumstances is grateful intelligence. But all my American correspondents, public and private, as they appear to care nothing about the affairs of Europe, seem alike to think us indifferent to those of America. This inattention will eventually produce consequences very serious to our country and its government.

There are others who feel the importance of European intercourse and an incessant vigilance towards it more forcibly, and cultivate it more assiduously. They have at

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least succeeded to make hard work for the government of the United States. In my letters to you last summer will be found as clear an anticipation as my observations could discover and my reflections combine of the events which are now taking place. I have not been silent on the subject to the Secretary of State. Of nearly thirty letters which I have written him since my return from England, I have an acknowledgment that four have been received. In one of your late letters it is intimated to me that the correspondence has not been on my part sufficiently frequent with the Treasury Department. I shall endeavor to avoid that complaint in future, but I hope it will be considered just that some suggestion should be made to me of the *objects* upon which information is desired, some instructions upon which a correspondence can be founded, and some sort of returns to the earnest solicitations which my letters have contained of measures to direct my conduct, and to provide for the punctuality of the United States in this country. To an urgent letter from me to the Secretary of the Treasury, written on the 13th of last June, I am still panting for an answer. The provision which I so long since entreated to be made in season has been now nearly two months defective. I am assaulted by dunning creditors on one side, by impatient bankers on the other, and month after month elapses in profound silence of advices or remittances from America. While the payments are failing, rumors of troubles and dissensions in the United States spread abroad, the funds depreciate, I am called upon from every quarter to know what the *real* accounts from thence are, and have only to confess that *my* accounts are two or three months in arrear of the current course.

It is not for the pleasure of complaining that I mention these circumstances; but on the one hand, I regret that

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a want of these reciprocal communications disenables me from so useful a discharge of my duty as my own wishes would dictate; and on the other, that I sometimes take great pains to compare and combine symptoms that occur in Europe to announce what an attentive correspondence from America would inform me to be an old story there, thoroughly understood, and about which all my toils would be perfectly useless. An instance of the last kind, considerably important, is that of the suspicions intimated in my letter to you N. 24.[1] When I wrote it I had not heard a syllable of the French project upon our western territory. But the concurrence of several circumstances which I then noticed to you convinced me, that something very pernicious to the United States was in agitation, though I could not precisely divine what it was. Afterwards, from the American newspapers when I received them, and especially from the President's address to the people, I found that I might spare myself the trouble of endeavoring to detect what was already abundantly discovered, and that it would be needless to lose myself in a chase of probabilities, to throw a new mite of conjecture into the settled balance of demonstration.

I have already written you an account of the refusal of the French Directory to receive Mr. Pinckney, and the apparent alliance between them and the internal enemies of the American government. But since my last letter Mr. Monroe has delivered his letters of recall, and upon that occasion made a speech which was answered by the President of the Directory, Barras. Mr. Monroe's address indicates what his language and conduct will be upon his return. The same unqualified devotion to the French will, which made him so confidential with Fauchet upon the parties within the United States before he set out upon his mission,

[1] August 13, 1796.

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has influenced him in this last transaction; and at the moment when a national indignity, outrageous as it was unprovoked, was offered to his country, he still condescends to flatter them, by an eulogy upon the *generous services*, which they themselves have long since publicly and officially declared to have been *merely the fruit of a vile speculation;* by a declaration as false as it is dishonorable to America, that the principles of their Revolution and of ours were the same; by an exulting reference to his military services in our war; and by an ostentatious avowal of his partiality for the present cause of France, and all this without even hinting the mission of Mr. Pinckney, whose personal and patriotic merits are surely not inferior to his own. The answer of Barras is such that I scarcely know which it inspires most, of indignation at the design which it developes, or of contempt for the mode of its execution. In comparison with it the language of Genet was decency and modesty. The public opinion concerning it in Europe appears unanimous. I have not heard it mentioned by an individual but with disgust at its thrasonical bombast, and ridicule at its bullying menaces. This tone has been instigated by their American partisans, who have suggested to them that the American government and people must be frightened into a violation of their treaty with Britain and of their neutrality. The affectation of parade which was made on this occasion, the display of Ambassadors from Sardinia, from a Duke of Parma, and a Bey of Tunis,[1] the trophies from the battle of Arcola, and the commandant of the national guards, all you may be sure were designed to look and sound very tremendous. They really think the American people not only

[1] Comte Balbo was ambassador from Sardinia; the Marquis del Campo was ambassador from Spain and chargé d'affaires of the Duke of Parma; and Mehemet Coggea was envoy from Hamonde Pacha, Bey of Tunis.

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as ignorant of Europe as they themselves are of America, but moreover idiots and cowards, upon whom tinsel can with the utmost facility be palmed for bullion, and with whom a Bey of Tunis or an Infant Duke of Parma would furnish as potent a proof of the invincible prevalence of the French power, as the Empires of Austria, Russia, or Great Britain. In reality their selection of ambassadors to witness their triumph over Mr. Monroe has in it something burlesque. Tremble, O ye people of America, for at the moment when a French Director announces the fury of France against your government, his Republic, rich by her liberty, surrounded by a retinue of victories, and strong by the esteem of her allies, displays before your eyes her dubious Italian trophies, and her expiatory embassies from the Duke of Parma and the Bey of Tunis! All this in substance is perfectly ridiculous; but coupled with the insolence of Barras's speech, with his professed distinction between the government and the people of the United States, with his compliments to Mr. Monroe, and his recommendation to him to go home and represent the American people there, it fully proves that the design of attack upon the government by a renewal of Genet's *appeal to the people* is prepared and concerted, so as to open upon the commencement of a new administration. They very evidently expect great effects from this manœuvre; their American partisans in Europe already exult, as if our rupture with Great Britain was completely effected, the friends of our government are alarmed and fearful that they will be intimidated into submission, or abandoned by the people their only support; that this patronage of France will give such weight to the efforts of faction that they will be no longer resistible, and the system of neutrality will necessarily be overturned. To say that I myself am without profound anxiety in this respect would be idle and false.

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The character, temper and conduct of the two last Houses of Representatives in Congress have made it impossible to discard apprehensions for the future, and the measures which the popular leaders of the antifederal party have adopted, sanctioned and justified, remove every hope that any scruple of independence, patriotism or justice will interfere between the views of France and *their* active exertions to support them.

I presume, however, that there is in the American government a spirit which will not tamely submit to be bullied out of its system, even by the combined insolence of a French Directory, with the utmost malignity of internal faction. I presume also, that a great majority of the American people will see through the object of this transaction, and despise the insidious attempt to separate and discriminate them from their government. I *hope* that to the future President of the United States, whoever he may be, the peace of his country, its honor, and its justice will be as dear as they are to the present, and while every honest voice is uttering admiration, and every humane heart ejaculating blessings to the name of Washington, that his successor, by exhibiting a continuance of the same wisdom, firmness and moderation, will prove to the sceptics in political speculation, that the American soil is fruitful of those virtues, and the American people determined to support them.

A rupture of our treaty with Great Britain is in a manner the professed demand upon which the French Directory have made these recent terrific demonstrations; a suspension of our trade with Britain will perhaps be required, as a condition for a restoration of their good-will. That this is their clear design, I have long since written you. How far they will go to obtain their end, it is impossible to say. It will depend in a great measure upon the support they meet from their party in America. If our government

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discover a single symptom of a disposition to yield; or if the House of Representatives for the ensuing Congress should from its complexion encourage the hopes of obtaining a majority adverse to the system of the Executive, the Directory will not scruple at any measure of hostility which they may imagine, or be persuaded, will increase their influence by the arguments of fear. It is painful to say it, but I am afraid it is true, that they will be instigated from America to repeat and accumulate hostilities to promote the purpose. But if the executive should maintain that dignified firmness and moderation which has hitherto distinguished it, and the Representatives more decidedly concur in the established system of neutrality than they have done, the French government will inevitably retreat, abandon their design of driving us into the war, and be willing to resume their amicable intercourse with that of the United States.

In forming this opinion, which is perfectly decided in my mind, I draw the conclusion both from their present mode of proceeding, and from their conduct hitherto with *all* the other neutral nations. My letters of last summer have given you a detail of their proceedings to defeat all the neutrality in Europe, and of their various success according as the neutral state was or was not totally in their power. In Florence, Venice, Genoa and Lucca they succeeded; but in Sweden, in Denmark, in Turkey, and even in Prussia, they totally failed. Their experiment upon Sweden has probably thrown that power permanently into the Russian scale, and had they not desisted from their intrigues and menaces against Denmark, they would have met with the same disappointment there.

Notwithstanding their refusal to receive Mr. Pinckney, they have authorized a public denial of the report that they had suspended all intercourse with the government of the

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United States; at the same time their affectation of courtship to the people of the United States shows that their real object is only to intimidate, and indeed in their present situation, however they may bluster, they have no inclination to increase the number of their enemies.

In order to defeat the views of further hostility which may be urged by the domestic enemies of the government, and to deter the Directory from proceeding any further, it appears to me a very important and very effectual measure would be for the American government, by the means of some official paper, to expose, in a clear and explicit manner, the total want of provocation by them that would palliate the injustice and insolence of the Directory; to show beyond the power of refutation, as might be done with perfect ease, that France has not the smallest pretext for a rupture; to state the unquestionable right of the United States to contract the engagements of the British treaty, and to disclaim in the most explicit manner every idea of violating any of the previous engagements with France; to prove that the British treaty itself protects every former stipulation with other powers, and at the same time decisively to repel every pretence that the United States were ever dependent upon France for anything more than obligations of reciprocal and equal alliance. An official paper of this kind, written with coolness and temper, like the letter demanding the recall of Genet, would have a very favorable effect upon the public opinion of all Europe, and of France in particular, where the people are already heartily sick of war, and where upon the appearance of such a statement, the Directory would not dare take any further violent measures. For even now everybody inquires what the United States have done, or what the occasion is of this conduct of the Directory; nothing is stated to the public, but a vague pretence of a more

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favorable stipulation for military provisionings to the British than to them, and an intimation of studied obscurity that the American government had condescended to the *suggestions* of their ancient tyrants. In the paper mentioned in my last letter this word *suggestions* is likewise used, when they say, that the "fatal treaty *passed* (in the House of Representatives) only by a majority of two," notwithstanding wretched *suggestions*. Perhaps you may not be aware that they mean by this word to intimate *bribery*. This is undoubtedly its meaning, and the obliquity of the expression is for the sake of eluding the repulse of a just indignation, which a direct assertion of the same thing would naturally rouse. But in another paper from the same source, and published alike in the *Rédacteur*, they have produced the lie in all its naked malignity and deformity. For they charge Great Britain with endeavoring to overthrow the *balance of Europe* by abandoning Poland to its fate, and by enriching herself with the spoils of the French commerce, *by a treaty perfidiously purchased* — "par un traité perfidement acheté."

Indeed, cruel and false as this intimation is, it cannot be surprising not only that they should advance, but even that they should believe it. During several months, if the concurring reports of many different persons may be believed, Mr. Monroe made no scruple or hesitation to say in public and mixed companies, that he had not the smallest doubt but Mr. Jay was bribed to sign the treaty, and to one person he added that *to his certain knowledge*, when Mr. Jay was employed to negotiate for our navigation of the Mississippi, he did in fact negotiate against it.[1] The French, alas! have

[1] This refers to the propositions made in 1786 to the Continental Congress when Secretary for Foreign Affairs. See Sparks, *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 1783–1789, III. 202 *et seq.*

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but too clearly discovered that at least one man [1] high in the American government was not only susceptible of bribery, but capable of begging it; and where they had such satisfactory proof of a readiness for prostitution to them, it cannot be wondered that they should believe the imprudent and iniquitous prejudices of Mr. Monroe's opinions, of a like propensity in others, though towards a different direction.

You will however perceive in the present conduct of the Directory what sort of a disposition they bear towards an administration at the head of which you may be placed. They know perfectly well how inflexibly you maintained the honor and interest of America in former times against the insidious policy of Vergennes, and they know equally the consistency and firmness of character, which will alike maintain the same cause against their more pernicious designs. Whatever, therefore, their artifices, working upon popular passions and concerted with antifederal partisans, can *effect*, you will take it for granted they will endeavor. Should the suffrages of the American people impose upon you the burthen of the chief magistracy, it will be necessary to consider this as a settled point, as a source of embarrassments and obstacles, against which every possible counteracting provision must be made. If the helm of our public affairs should be committed to other hands, they will certainly be more favored by the French Directory, so long as it shall be under the government of Sieyès; but I hope they will not be found more ready to sacrifice the welfare of America to the humble pupil of Favier [2] and Franklin, than yours.

The Directory is composed of discordant materials, but they have divided their functions into several departments,

[1] Edmund Randolph.

[2] Jean Louis Favier (*c.* 1720–1784), author of an essay on the "Government of Holland" (1748), and another on the "Position of France in the Political System of Europe."

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and the transaction of all business relative to each particular department is left to one member. The department of the foreign affairs is thus held by Rewbell,[1] a man of strong nerves and weak brain, altogether under the direction of Sieyès, whose cool head, unfeeling heart, and cowardly disposition, have been noticed to you in former letters. He dared not take himself a seat which was offered him in the Directory, but he knew that the opinions of his old colleague would be at his disposal, and has accordingly always governed him. This circumstance is well known; for Sieyès, having among his other qualities some vanity, takes care to have it understood that he is the manager of Rewbell. It seems to be a sort of association, in which each supplies the qualities denied to the other. One is the soul, and the other the body. One enjoys the profit and parade with the personal dangers of office, and the other has its management and conduct, but without its responsibility. Sieyès bears a personal ill-will to you, a political ill-will to the prosperity and union of the United States, and a speculative ill-will to the principles of our Constitution; and with all these dispositions concurring together, no proof of malevolence that may hereafter be given will be unexpected to you. I have formerly suggested that no scruple of morality will interfere, to prevent the use of *any* means by which the French government may think a desirable end attainable, and my opinion is founded, not only upon their uniform conduct through all their Revolutions, but upon the professed principles avowed by the publications of those who have been employed in the direction of their public affairs. The memoirs of Dumouriez, of Madame Roland, and of Garat, are full of proofs that this idea is not without foundation.

A resolution not to be moved, a candor and moderation

[1] Jean-François Rewbell (1747–1807).

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not to be angered, a sincere regard for the welfare and wish for the friendship of France, with a temper not to be intimidated by menaces or forced by hostilities, unfolded clearly to the sense and understanding of all the world, I am convinced, would go far to disarm them of all the weapons upon the efficacy of which they now place their dependence. Something must be done, and I beg leave again to repeat the solicitation, that a more steady and systematic attention to the affairs of Europe in general may be paid by the government. The President, indeed, has told us, and I am profoundly convinced of the justice and importance of the advice, that we ought not to involve ourselves at all in the political systems of Europe, but to keep ourselves always distinct and separate from it. But even to effect this, constant and early information of the current events and of the political projects in contemplation is no less necessary than if we were directly concerned in them. It is necessary for the discovery of the efforts made to draw us into the vortex, in season to make preparations against them. From one of the quotations in this letter, it is observable that France very formally considers the United States as forming a weight in the balance of Europe. France must, therefore, necessarily conduct itself towards us upon this supposition. Britain will with equal certainty do the same. It behooves us to be the more cautious and vigilant to counteract all their intrigues and exertions on either side to make us the instruments or the victims of their conquering or plundering ambition. The late king of Prussia always answered with his own hand every dispatch from every one of his ministers abroad. If he had no instructions to give, yet he never failed to acknowledge the receipt of the dispatch, and recommend to the minister a continuance of his zeal and industry. The mere effect of such an *example* spreads in more than a geometrical ratio.

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Negligence on one side creates it on the other, and I know from personal experience how readily indolence and carelessness will creep in upon the steadiest resolutions of industry, with an apology derived from a reciprocal inattention. Until Mr. Pickering was appointed to the State Department my letters were scarcely ever answered, and of more than fifty letters that I wrote the receipt not of five was ever acknowledged. With regard to *me* and my mission, it might not be of material consequence; but the case was the same with all the other ministers of the government in Europe; all were neglected, and it would have been but natural if many had been tempted thereby to inattention in return.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

[Oliver Wolcott]

The Hague, January 20th, 1797.

Sir:

. . . . . .

The great prevalence of easterly winds for the last three months has been the occasion that all the vessels from America have had long passages, and accounts for the extraordinary time elapsed between the date and reception of the present remittances. At the same time I beg leave to suggest, that the common accidents of an Atlantic voyage make it indispensable for the maintenance of punctuality, that the remittances destined for the provision of any particular payment be dispatched from America at least two months before the day when that payment becomes demandable. And I cannot in terms too forcible urge the importance of invariable punctuality in the European payments. I hope it will not be deemed impertinent, though

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it may perhaps be superfluous, to observe that among the favorite pursuits of the more inveterate enemies to the government of the United States, that of perplexing the operations of their finances, and depriving it of the credit of regularity, is not the least persevering or inflexible. I may add, that at the present moment and in this country credit is power. It would not be surprising if a foreign power of very efficacious influence here should be now inclined, and should for some time to come labor to procure the show of a political variance between this Republic and the *government* of the United States, and there is nothing that can so strongly contribute to counteract such designs, if they really exist, as the interest of payments continually accruing with the idea that a serious variance might eventually impede them. But to arguments of this nature effect can only be given by constant and unremitted punctuality, for if one payment after another is suffered to run in arrears, and the funds consequently to depreciate, an opinion of irregularity insensibly prevails, and the consequences of misunderstanding are no longer viewed as so material.

On the first of next June an instalment of one million of guilders will again be payable. With so many concurring views and interests to multiply the instances of tardy payments as appear to me to be working, I cannot avoid an anxious solicitation that the provision for that may be made in due season. According to the rule which I have mentioned above, it should be dispatched from the United States not later than the first of April. I hope this letter may reach you before that period. With respect to the Antwerp payments, I have before suggested to your consideration the expediency of a different mode of provision for it in future, which may not leave it at the discretion of a rivalship in trade. Indeed, from the facility with which I might have

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secured this payment by drawing bills upon the Treasury had I thought expedient to use that resort at an earlier period, I believe that it would not be difficult to make it in that manner hereafter. At the same time it cannot be given as a certain resource, especially as there can be no doubt, but that every possible exertion will be made by the bankers at Amsterdam to prevent the negotiation of bills upon America. Of this I have at this moment a very strong proof. They wrote me about a week since, stating their great anxiety at not receiving either remittances or advices from the Department of the Treasury, and the impossibility they were under in such circumstances to advertise the usual payments for the first of February, calling at the same time upon me to provide them with means for facing that demand. In answer to a previous call of the same kind, I had written them that I could give them authority to draw upon the Treasury to a certain amount in case of absolute necessity. They reply that this is no resource at all, for that if bills upon America could be negotiated they should draw of course, depending upon due honor to their drafts, but that scarcely ever would it be possible, and certainly not at present, to raise money at Amsterdam by bills upon the United States; and indeed that there could be no possible inducement to take such bills, money being of so high a value and American stocks being 10 per cent lower in London than at Philadelphia. This argument from the price of stocks in London is the burthen of every song, and is repeated with as much concern as if its fallacy had not long since been detected. I am persuaded that you have often heard of it from them, and presume you are perfectly aware that it is not decisive. The fact is, that the pretended prices current of our stocks in London are arbitrary estimates to which very few purchases or sales are conformable, and that no consider-

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able sum can be obtained at such a rate or anything near it. Besides which a merchant at Amsterdam may have large remittances to America to make, without authority or inclination to make then in American stocks from London. But the fact of $20,000 so easily negotiated is better than any reasoning, and I might have had the remainder at the same time, had I chosen to give one per cent more for it, which as the bills were at sixty days would have been an exchange at par. I have heretofore alleged to you the reasons which induced me not to take it. It may however be considered as certain that the bankers will never use this resource, and will make every effort in their power to prevent its being used. Their aversion to it may be seen in their declining to use it at the very moment when they are without remittances to face a payment close at hand, and which they declare themselves for want of such remittances compelled to suspend. The delay of payment could affect only the interests of the United States; the negotiation of bills on America would affect their own.

The arrival of the present remittances will prevent a failure on the first of February, and I hope that further supplies will arrive in time to provide for the first of March; but indeed a postponement at this time would have a most unfavorable effect upon the credit of the government. These claims are so continually accruing, and every instance of the payments delayed makes such impressions, that an earlier dispatch of remittances is absolutely indispensable. The last year the January interests were upon this very point of being delayed. Those of the ensuing month are secured only by a few days, and the usual time of advertising them has already elapsed. Those of Antwerp have been nearly two months defective, and the bankers at Amsterdam yet are heavily in advance. At this moment they think themselves

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to discharge the premiums of the four per cent loan due on the first of March by the emission of new bonds. This right it seems is reserved to the United States by the contract, but heretofore the payment has always been made in specie. The new bonds thus thrown upon the market will still more tend to depreciate the general price of the stocks, and to render impracticable the prolongation of the instalment of last June. The bankers have requested my opinion on this subject, stating the necessity they are under to take this measure for avoiding a greater increase of their advances. I could not oppose it however sensible of its inconveniences, and therefore informed them that I had no authority or instructions concerning it.[1]

I have the honor &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, January 31, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

While an unusual pressure of occupation obliged me to postpone for a few days a reply to your favor of the 17th instant, I received also that of the 22. Since which the notes and proceedings of the French Minister at Phila-

[1] "I have this morning received the honor of your letters of November 25 and 28 and December 6. . . . These letters give notice of remittances to the bankers, which, together with these the receipt of which was mentioned in my last letter, will I think amply provide for all the demands upon the United States here, until the first of March inclusively. They have very much relieved me after a long expectation, at a moment when various circumstances contribute to render the punctuality of our public payments highly important. At the same time they perhaps make an apology necessary for the strong urgencies in my late letters. The necessity, however, of expediting the sums demandable at particular days, earlier than has hitherto been done, still remains, and you will perceive by a letter from the bankers, dated the 21st, and of which they have sent me a copy, as they express it, for my *information* and *government*, that they shall never consider themselves obliged

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delphia,[1] as well as the President's speech at the opening of Congress, have reached me directly from America. The attempt of the French government to separate the American people from their government is very unequivocal, and will undoubtedly bring to a test the feelings of our countrymen. If I can place any dependence upon the accounts which I receive, the effect of these measures upon *the people* has been such as you and I have anticipated. There are undoubtedly individuals, who will follow the standards of France even into the heat of a struggle. After the last war the British

to make an advance for the supply of Antwerp payment, be it upon orders however peremptory. Their reflections upon Mr. De Wolf, and his upon them, serve to show the several reasonings of rivals in trade without much impartiality on either side. He has no future expectations of profit to induce him. The gentlemen at Amsterdam, from the benefits they have already enjoyed, and the continual accruing advantages of their business are amply compensated for their advances; and yet when they are to make one, they ring the peals of obligation and service, as if the public salvation were dependent upon them." *To the Secretary of the Treasury*, January 23, 1797. Ms.

[1] Adet's letters of October 27 and November 17, 1796. *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 576, 579. The minister published them in the newspapers at the moment they were sent to the Secretary of State. They were also issued as a pamphlet, printed with the general view of influencing the measures of administration. The publication was timed for producing some influence on the choice of a President.

"I inclose a pamphlet containing two notes from the French minister here, Mr. Adet, and my answer to the first. It would have been very desirable to have avoided appearing in this form before the public; but the tenor of his first note, officiously published by himself and the actual state of things here, rendered the publication of my answer indispensable. The second and long note of Mr. Adet was sent by him to the press of the *Aurora* for publication, as was announced by Mr. Bache the morning after I had received the original. He promised, and in a day or two gave a sketch of it: but it was impossible for the public to form a tolerable idea of the note from that sketch, which was only calculated to do mischief. Hence a translation from the original was deemed necessary, and it was published without delay. The interests of the French Republic, whatever might be the expectations of its minister and its Government, will not be promoted by these notes: as far as I can learn, they have been read but with one sentiment, and that of indignation." *From the Secretary of State*, November 26, 1796.

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government and nation had to provide at an immense expense for individuals, who had followed their standards, for individuals whose counsels had contributed to lure Great Britain into the contest, and who hung upon her after it was ended, the victims and the burdens of her defeat. I hope that France will judge she has enough of her own citizens to provide for. But with the great body of the American people France will only lose influence by persisting in her present system, and while she is endeavoring to break our commercial connections with Britain, my greatest apprehension is, that she will rivet them the more closely.

There is indeed a curious sort of political speculation in the affectation of rage against a government with affection for its people, when that government is the mere creature of the people, established upon and preserved by the frequent repetition of the freest and most unbiassed popular elections upon earth.

It seems to me that the French government might infer something from a circumstance to which, however, they do not perhaps fully attend. Of the twenty Senators who concurred to ratify our treaty with Britain, scarcely one now remains in that body; almost all have voluntarily resigned. New elections have taken place to substitute others in their stead, and in every instance of which I have yet heard, their places have been supplied by men equally determined in support of the same system. Sedgwick and Goodhue instead of Cabot and Strong, Lawrence instead of King, Stockton instead of Frelinghuysen, are specimens.

The reception of the President's address to the people might serve as another indicative to France of the temper of our people. From that let them judge of the success that has attended all their endeavors to tear our benefactor from our hearts; let them see the issue of all their manœuvres

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and all their libels; of their Baches and Randolphs in America, as well as their Theremins and their Paines in Europe.

The legislatures of the several states which have been in session since the address have resolved unanimously to record it at full length upon their journals; those of Massachusetts and Maryland have ordered that it be printed and published with their laws. I see a proposal in the House of Delegates of *Virginia* unanimously adopted, to address the President with a declaration of their profound regret at his determination to retire from the public service. Can France possibly believe that Mr. Jefferson, or any other man, would dare to start away from that system of administration which Washington has thus sanctioned, not only by his example, but by his retirement?

Nay, in my mind I have no doubt but that if, instead of Jefferson, the ex-Vicomte de Barras himself were President of the United States, he could not stagger the system.

But they wish to interrupt or suspend our commerce with Great Britain; and are they ignorant that this would be impossible, even if they could produce a war between the two nations? Can France purchase of us, and *pay* for the articles which we sell to Britain? Certainly not. Yet they are articles which must be bought and must be sold. France herself at this moment can not exist without British manufactures, and in spite of all her prohibitions is daily receiving them. The longer she continues the war, the more she will sink into this kind of dependence. It rests upon a law of nature that laughs at all human legislation. It is *want* on one side, and the *means of supply* on the other. The case would be the same in America to a greater extent, because to the want of buying would be added in great force the want of selling; for France cannot give us a market for the articles, which a suspension of our trade to Britain would nail down to our floors, or leave to perish on our hands.

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It is conjectured by some, that the plunder expected to be procured by depredations upon our commerce is one of the objects of the French government in their present proceedings. I would hope this opinion is unfounded, but if the want of a sea letter such as never existed, is a reason for taking a vessel, it is vain to argue upon principles of justice and equity. I do not think it wise or judicious in France to compel the Americans to look out for all their means of defence against her. Her *reputation* of power is of more service to her than in this instance its actual exertion would be. A contest forced upon us will discover her weakness as well as her strength, and between ourselves her effective power is by no means formidable *to us*. Her late expedition against Ireland and its issue have unfolded some of her naval imbecility, which it would have been her interest to keep as much as possible concealed. Let her triumph upon the continent. Let her take Mantua and even Rome.[1] Let her renew, if she thinks fit, her incursions into Germany, or march her armies through Spain. Between us and her, thank Heaven, there is a great gulf. She may [harass ?] our trade until it shall obtain effectual protection. She may deny us the friendship which we wish, and lose our's, which has been sincere and beneficial to her, but she cannot do us any great and essential injury.

The idea which you mention of printing a small pamphlet, stating our true sentiments and situation towards France, the *reciprocal* and *mutual* interests upon which our connection with her was originally founded and ought still to be continued, the strong and earnest desire we have of harmonizing with her, and the spirit of independence which characterizes the great mass of the American people, strikes me very agreeably. I hope you will put it into execution, and

[1] Rome was occupied by French troops in February, 1798.

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shall with great pleasure furnish you with the ideas that occur to me upon these topics. I shall wish to be supplied with a number of copies of it, because it will have its utility here as well as in France. Some of the views I have upon these points are suggested in this and in my last letter, though both written in such hurry that they are huddled in without order or arrangement. I shall return to the subject again.

With respect to the original connection, it is well known to those who were then in the secret of our affairs, that the terms of *equality* and *reciprocity* upon which our alliance and treaties with France rest, were the result of a system adopted by Congress after deliberation. Had we meant to be *dependent* upon France for our liberty, the situation would doubtless have been for some special favor secured to France. It was because the American nation did not choose to change one dependence for another that, in forming its contract with France, provision was so expressly made for equality and reciprocity, and the power of making commercial arrangements with other nations was so expressly reserved in the most unlimited manner.

The memorial of Mr. Turgot, which I mentioned to you in my last letter, is dated April, 1776, and serves as a key to the policy of France at that time. It shows at the same time Turgot's opinion, that the Americans would prevail in their contest without *the assistance of France.* Indeed in considering the subject this memorial of Mr. Turgot deserves a profound meditation. I presume you have seen it, but if not you will find it at the close of a book published at Paris from the manuscripts found in the famous iron box of the late King, and entitled *Politique de tous les cabinets de l'Europe sous Louis* 15 *et* 16. Burgoyne's army, you know, capitulated in October, 1777. The account of that event arrived in Europe in December of the same year, and our

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treaties with France were signed on the 6th of February, 1778.

I find myself at the end of my paper, and the post is on the point of departure. I have only therefore to assure you of the cordial friendship and esteem of your's.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 93 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

THE HAGUE, February 1, 1797.

SIR:

. . . . . .

The proceedings of the French Minister at Philadelphia have been such as I had expected. The counterpart of the same system has taken place in Europe by the refusal to receive Mr. Pinckney, by the speech of the Director Barras to Mr. Monroe, when he presented his letters of recall, and probably by the issuing of orders to the armed vessels of France to intercept all the American navigation to or from the ports of Great Britain.

It is certain that the project of alienating the people of the United States from their executive government, of negotiating with what has hitherto been the minority of the House of Representatives, and of compelling a suspension of commerce between the United States and Great Britain, has been seriously undertaken by the present administrators of the French government. Their principal object in this pursuit is to injure their most powerful enemy, by depriving her of the benefits of the American trade, and in this respect it is only the extension of the system which has during the last season been pursued throughout Europe. But at the same time it is impossible to resist the belief that a sentiment of fear and jealousy towards the United States themselves concurs among the motives for this policy.

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Since the establishment of this French Republic it has been officially announced by one of their ministers for foreign affairs, that the policy of his predecessors, Vergennes and Montmorin, towards the United States, and their consequent instructions to the French Ambassadors in America were founded upon their opinion "that it did not suit France to give the United States the degree of vigor of which they were susceptible, because they would thereby acquire a strength *of which they would probably be tempted to make a bad use.*"

The National Convention too, in their address to the United States of December 22, 1792, have told us that the ambassadors of the former Court of France in America had "the criminal order to arrest the course of our prosperity." These declarations were made at a time when France appeared to have abandoned altogether the policy prevalent under their monarchy with respect to their foreign concerns, when they were at war with most of their former allies, and when they deemed the friendship of the United States highly important to them. Since that time, however, they have in almost every other respect returned to the same external policy which had been followed under their monarchy. Spain is again in close alliance with them. Prussia harmonizes with them, by the common enmity against the House of Austria and against Russia. They have taken great pains to renew their former influence over Turkey and Sweden. The principle of aggrandizing their own territories is now the sole object, for which they persist in a most destructive war, and every act of their government indicative of their foreign policy testifies the resumption of the opinions entertained by Vergennes. In addition to this the very advantages, which the people of the United States have derived from their neutrality during the present war, occasion sentiments not perfectly cordial in the minds of those who have

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surrounded themselves with ruins, and induce them perhaps to think that their interests require an exertion to check the rapid growth of our prosperity. To effect this purpose, they consider the division of sentiment and opinion which exist within the United States as one of their most powerful means, and I have reason to believe that they place great dependence upon finding the late measures of the Minister Adet supported and encouraged by a large portion of the American people.

. . . . . .

I have the honor &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, February 3, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

A few days ago I received at once your letters of November 11, from Quincy, and of December 5, from Philadelphia. In the course of three or four days, indeed, I had a flood of American letters pouring upon me, and can no longer complain of that inattention and neglect, which an interval of three or four months had occasioned me to mention in my last letter.

Very soon after you wrote the elections of President and Vice President were completed. They have excited in England and France, and in this country, a degree of interest and attention which proves the rising importance of the United States. The event has been expected with a degree of feeling, of trepidation, of ardent wishes in favor of one or the other candidate, which has afforded one more melancholy proof of the profoundly rooted principle of animosity, which at this moment arms one half of the human race against the other. All the friends and partisans of ancient establishments, good or bad, throughout Europe, all the adherents

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of Great Britain, all the people who have property yet left in their hands, all the peaceable, moderate and humane, and all the enemies to the present French administration, a motley mixture, whose sentiments one would imagine never to concur in any one point, agree in their wishes for the success of one of the persons considered as candidates; while all the adherents to the present French government, all those who pant for revolutions, all who are by anticipation feasting upon the plunder of the present proprietors, all who are fattening upon war and raising fortunes upon the misery of nations, all the remaining enthusiasts of democracy, and all who desire to see the United States at war with Britain, are equally zealous in favor of another. They seem on both sides to fancy that the destiny, not only of America but of Europe, is in a manner suspended upon the decision, and both have already indulged in the exultation of announcing that the choice has fallen upon him whom they respectively favor.

From the returns of the most recent date, the accuracy of which must however be considered as very questionable, it would seem that a bare majority of the suffrages has called you to the post of the highest eminence and danger, while that which you now hold will in the terms of the Constitution be assigned to Mr. Jefferson; and the difference of numbers amounts to not more than two or three votes. Whether Mr. Jefferson will choose to serve the public in the second station, or if he should refuse, what measures will be taken in a case for which no special provision seems to have been hitherto made either by the Constitution or the laws, it is useless for me to anticipate. What other questions or difficulties may arise or be started, it were equally needless to conjecture. As I presume you will not reject this call of your country, the time for observations upon the

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evils of the situation is past, and my duty henceforth will only be to transmit the most accurate information that I can collect of the state of our affairs in this country particularly, and in Europe generally, as well as of the general complexion of European affairs from time to time.

The first object of our attention at this time is the predicament in which we stand towards France. I have written to you largely and repeatedly upon this subject. Nothing new has turned up since my last, except rumors and reports propagated by the usual French mechanism to operate upon the public opinion. Our American letters generally say, that the late conduct of the French government has not occasioned any alarm in the United States. I cannot say the same of the Americans in Europe. Many of the friends of our government are frightened, and the impression produced upon our stocks here is considerable. Every artifice of France is at work, and there is scarcely anything operating to counteract it. As far as my means extend I am not idle; but they are feeble and solitary, and my American intelligence is always old. In general the alarm is heightened by Americans themselves. I have in a former letter given you a statement of the interests and motives which concur to bias the minds of our country men now in Europe, and informed you that Paris has long been the resort of many individuals, to whom the destruction of our government and a civil war in the United States are objects of desire and pursuit.

It cannot be too strenuously repeated, because the final event depends altogether upon this single point of fact. The French government have been led to believe, that the *people* of the United States have but a feeble attachment to their government, and will not support them in a contest with that of France. It is upon the idea of this internal

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weakness and division alone, that the French have hitherto ventured upon their late measures, and as they are still flattered with the same hope, it is impossible to ascertain how far it will lead them. The event of the Presidential election as now announced has exceedingly mortified them. Upon a train which they had so long been concerting and laying, they had founded and been encouraged in the most sanguine expectation of settling the choice. The effect which they certainly did produce, that of throwing thirteen or fourteen votes into one scale, which but for them would have been in the other, and their approximation to success, have rather stimulated further exertions, than deterred them from repeating their experiment. Their ill success has provoked without discouraging them, and they are assured that by persevering and bearing harder upon us, they shall compel the American government to submit, or succeed in overturning it. I speak not from simple conjecture, but from inferences, confirmed by personal observation and by intelligence tolerably direct.

They know perfectly well that if the matter should be brought to an hostile issue, and the American people support the measures of their government, France must give up the contest. They know that France by doing her worst cannot essentially hurt us externally. As to her sending an army against us they have not the most distant idea of it, and you may judge from the issue of their expedition against Ireland, in what a condition their naval power is. Ships it is indeed possible for them to build and rig, but sailors and marine officers they cannot make, and they have them not. The famous Irish expedition, besides all its preparatory expenses, has cost them three ships of the line, three flutes, two frigates, two cutters, several transports, four or five thousand men, and a great deal of damage to all

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their vessels returned. From the first moment of their sailing until the return of the last transport, every circumstance that has been related of them, or that they relate themselves, shows their total destitution of naval skill or experience. One would imagine from the accounts that they had not on board the whole fleet a man capable of managing a sail boat. The French papers announce still very pompously, that great preparations are making for a second expedition; but the General Hoche is appointed to another command, and if they venture out with their fleet again, it will only be to meet with a more disastrous fate. As to their allies, Spain and Holland, nothing is to be expected from any concert of operations between them. The history of the late Dutch expedition against the Cape of Good Hope affords two important incidents, from which the conclusions are inevitable. That expedition was planned in concert with the French, and at three several stations on the passage they had engaged to furnish a reinforcement of troops. At every one of them they totally failed. On the very first appearance of the English squadron, the Dutch sailors almost unanimously stripped off their three-colored cockades, substituted the Orange badges in their stead, rose upon their officers, would not suffer the Admiral to employ the sad resource of burning or injuring his ships, but compelled him to surrender them up at discretion, and seven-eighths of them immediately entered into the British service. The same temper prevails among the seamen here in the Texel, and it is but a few days since I heard a marine officer say in answer to General Rewbell, a brother of the French Director, who was inquiring why their maritime exertions here were so feeble, — "you know that *almost all our sailors are against us.*"

What sort of harmony of operations at sea between France

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and *Spain* is to be anticipated may be judged from the well known circumstance, that many of the Spanish ships are commanded by French emigrants, and when a Spanish squadron lately put into the harbor of Toulon, some of these officers were arrested, imprisoned, and with difficulty rescued by the Spanish Admiral from the municipal administration of the place.

In this country the conviction, as far as I can judge, is universal, that they have much to lose and nothing to gain by a difference with the United States. Our commerce and our payments are almost the only resources, the enjoyment of which is yet left them. In my conversations with their merchants, and even with members of their government, they freely acknowledge this, though they as freely say they fear that they should be *forced* to follow whatever France should dictate to them, and this is unquestionably true. An intelligent and considerable merchant of Rotterdam told me a few days ago, that he *was glad* the French government had determined to intercept our trade with England, because it would essentially injure Great Britain and must be excused by reasons of state. I asked him what he thought would be the consequence of an embargo of six months laid by the American government. "It would bring us all," said he, "English, French and ourselves to your terms, but the American government cannot carry it through."

I shall for the future send you constantly a Paris newspaper of considerable reputation, as well as the *Leyden Gazette*. I hope they may sometimes give you valuable information.

I am &c.

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TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, February 7, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

A circumstance which cannot escape observation is the treatment at this time experienced from the same quarter [the Directory] by Mr. Monroe. He has been upon a tour through this country, and spent a week here. He came strongly recommended to an influential member of the committee of Foreign Affairs, and to the Secretary of that committee, who as well as the French Minister here paid him the greatest attentions.

This member of the committee is devoted totally to France. He is the same of whom I related an anecdote in my No. 25 [November 25, 1796], which will give at once an idea of his character and his politics. He gave a splendid entertainment to Mr. Monroe, at which were present other members and the Secretary of the Committee, and to which he likewise invited me.[1] After dinner, while we were sitting at table, he accosted Mr. Monroe and myself by name and gave for toast "The *people* of America." The Secretary, upon whom I instantaneously turned my eye, was apparently confused, and instead of repeating the toast as given, substituted in its stead "The United States." Mr. Monroe said neither the one nor the other. This anecdote may appear very trivial, but is a clear indication of things far otherwise.

I saw Mr. Monroe almost every day while he was here. He conversed with me but little upon public affairs, and with great reserve particularly concerning our situation with

[1] "January 24. Dined at Mr. Hahn's, with Mr. and Mrs. Monroe, Messrs. [P.] Hartogh, [L. E.] Van Eck and Van Leyden." Ms. *Diary*.

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France. His deportment evidently discovered an exasperated and strongly agitated mind, though his conversation was in every particular extremely guarded. He went from this place to Amsterdam, where he stayed only a few days, and from whence he very suddenly set out for Utrecht on his return to Paris, on the same day when the news arrived here of the order to depart given to Mr. Pinckney.[1]

It would be very needless for me to tell you, that in this country your name is remembered with respect and attachment by the people of all parties. The proofs of it which I have observed ever since I have been in the country, are innumerable, and most particularly since the recent American elections have become an object of immediate notice and attention. There is, however, a power extant in this country which overrules all attachments, and will either silence respect, or render its voice unavailing. To an order signified from the French Directory, be it what it may, no resistance can be made, and never is attempted. If, therefore, they should require of this government to suspend all intercourse, commercial or political, or both, with the United States, they could not refuse the demand, although fully sensible that it would be a measure extremely odious to the people, and that in consequence of such a difference they would suffer much more injury than the Americans. If, therefore, I should be ordered away from hence, as Mr. Pinckney has been from Paris, you will not be surprised. I have not indeed at present any reason to expect it; but how soon the Directory may exact it, is impossible for me to say, and if executed it cannot be refused. This opinion is

[1] "General Pinckney has been ordered away; from what cause we cannot discover. Whether the elation of victory, or some news or intercepted letters, or all the things have influenced, is here unknown. He sets off tomorrow for Amsterdam." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, February 1, 1797. Ms.

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supported by an example which has already taken place with regard to Portugal.[1]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

THE HAGUE, February 8, 1797.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

. . . . . .

The address of the President declaring his intention to retire from the public service has been republished, translated, and admired all over Europe. But in France the usual arts of French intrigue in all their impudence and all their falsehood have been used against it. The most barefaced forgeries have been palmed upon the public in France under the name of translations and extracts of this address, and I know not whether one faithful French translation of it

[1] "To serve my country at her call, is not merely an ambition, but a duty; I cannot therefore refuse to perform it, especially at a moment when there is danger and inconvenience attending it. I am certainly making at this moment a sacrifice to my sense of duty. . . . At the same time I know it is a sacrifice which no other person will impute to me as a merit, and for which there is no other compensation than the consciousness of doing right. I have repeatedly talked to you of my country; of my unlimited attachment and devotion to it. The sentiment, like that of all other virtues, ought not to be displayed with ostentation, and therefore I seldom say anything of it, except where my free confidence allows and requires me to make a profession of principles, which at other times and with other persons, I hold it sufficient to keep in silence as the guides of my conduct. I may, therefore, own to you that my duty to my country is in my mind the first and most imperious of all obligations; before which every interest and every feeling inconsistent with it must forever disappear. It is that which requires my present continuance in Europe. For as to my personal advantage I am persuaded it would be more promoted by my immediate return to America, and by the direction of all my attention to my own concerns; and as an object of ambition, it is not at a distance like this from America, out of sight and out of hearing of his countrymen, that an ambitious American is to rise." *John Quincy Adams to Miss Louisa C. Johnson*, February 7, 1797. Ms.

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has appeared in that country. The *Leyden Gazette* has given one here, together with such encomiums upon the piece itself and its author, as both deserve and obtain from every virtuous mind, and has noticed the infidelity of the pretended translations published in the Paris papers. The French Directory, or their guide, have taken a dislike to the principles and fame of Washington, and have, among other of their little projects, undertaken to *run him down*. They have been at work two years upon it, and are now in a perfect frenzy at the thought that he has placed himself beyond the reach of their weapons. Yet they have been unable to succeed generally, even in France, where at the moment the generality of the nation revere his character, and where his name will be remembered with veneration, when they will escape detestation only inasmuch as they shall sink in oblivion. . . .

The election of President and Vice President, which was preparing with so much bustle, manœuvre, and intrigue when you wrote me, is now concluded, and on this day I presume the choice will be ascertained and declared. From the success of French influence in settling the votes of Pennsylvania, which was the first part of the transaction transmitted to France, the revolutionizers of the world had already announced the success of their candidate with a degree of exultation proportionate to the importance of the event. At present the accounts received lead to a belief among the public of a different issue, and the French Directory are accordingly mortified and provoked. Their vexation at this proof that they were not able to make a President of the United States enraged them to such a degree, that they immediately ordered Mr. Pinckney, whom they had before refused to receive, to quit France, and I expect every day to see him here. I am anxious to hear in what manner the

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feelings of my countrymen will receive these accumulated indignities and injuries, with which their too sincere and cordial friendship for France is returned. How they will bear to be informed, that the French Directory have resolved to force all the maritime and commercial nations out of their neutrality. They calculate upon such a party within the United States, totally devoted to them, as will at least disable the government from any means of defence, if not compel a submission to their most unjust dictates. . . .

My friend Otis,[1] I see, succeeds Mr. Ames as Representative in Congress for the district of Boston. While I lament that the public should be deprived of Mr. Ames's services at this early period of his life, and from so melancholy an occasion, I rejoice in the hopes that the talents and energy of Otis will be substituted in their stead. His eloquence, his activity and his firmness will be exerted, I am confident, in a good cause, and while he rises to eminence and fame himself, he will promote at the same time the honor, and dignity, and the true interests of his country. I am, &c.

TO RUFUS KING

THE HAGUE, February 9, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

It is not probable that the Directory are instigated to this last violent measure merely by mortification upon finding their influence inefficacious, though they probably believe they have not succeeded; but they combine with motives of this kind others proceeding from the determination to stop the intercourse of all the neutral commercial nations with Great Britain. The suspension of our com-

[1] Harrison Gray Otis.

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merce will perhaps be required as the price of reconciliation, and should the proposal be firmly rejected, they will proceed to intercept it as much as they can by force. The same proposition has very recently been made to Hamburg and Bremen, though as yet without success. The French minister at Hamburg is recalled. The demand has been repeated also at Copenhagen, and the refusal to comply has produced a diplomatic altercation perhaps as sharp as that between the American Secretary of State and Adet. The result is yet unknown. These proceedings are undoubtedly the effects of weakness, not of strength; of desperation, not of prudence. They know that they can effect nothing against Great Britain by their maritime exertions, and therefore they adopt the policy of depredations upon all commerce carried on with her. It has been so constantly the British policy that they conclude themselves justified by the example.

The system will be pursued in France to the utmost extent of the experiment. I firmly believe that the Directory care as little for its consequences, as their President professed in his speech to Mr. Monroe. For their colonies they care scarcely anything, nor is it probable that any change of their government will effect at present a change of their system. Our government and people must find and use all their means of defence, or submit to the dictates of the Directory. There is no other alternative left. They calculate much upon our internal divisions, and upon a party prepared rather to assist than oppose their projects of plunder.

I mentioned to you in my last letter that Mr. Monroe was here. He went soon after to Amsterdam, where he stayed a few days, and which he left very suddenly on his return to Paris, upon the same day that the account was received

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here of Mr. Pinckney's being ordered to leave France. I had some little conversation with Mr. Monroe upon the situation of our concerns with France after I wrote you. His conversation was extremely guarded. I asked him, upon what grounds the French government justified the system they had now adopted with regard to our commerce. He said that in his opinion they did not justify it at all, but their arguments were such as are "contained in Mr. Adet's note to the Secretary of State." He said nothing to me upon the subject of his recall, but it was easy to perceive that it was the idea constantly predominant in his mind.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO JOSEPH HALL

THE HAGUE, February 9, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I have many thanks to give you for your obliging favor of the 15th ultimo, which I received some days ago, together with some papers. I am glad you had an opportunity to visit Paris, while it was yet allowable for a Federal American to go there. The Directory suffered Mr. Pinckney to stay only until the result of the American elections was known to them. They have at length received their dispatches, and immediately after ordered Mr. Pinckney to leave France. I am hourly in expectation of seeing him here. It appears that they have determined we *shall not* any longer preserve our neutrality, and to force us upon taking a side in the war. They place great dependence upon the favor which they suppose the people of America bear to them and their cause, and suppose that, as their contest will be only with the *government* of the United States, they shall easily prevail in the struggle. It is true that the property, the commerce,

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the rights of the people, will be the victims of their depredations; but they persuade themselves the American people will charge all the fault of this only upon their own government, will abandon that to the resentment of France, submit to the will of the Directory, put up with the losses of their trade, and perhaps, like the Batavian, stipulate to pay forty or fifty millions of dollars for restoring them in such a fraternal manner to their liberty.

If they should find some part of their calculation erroneous, and that the people of the United States are not disposed to deliver up their government at discretion, they are determined in all probability to try their strength against us. Their maritime force is not, indeed, at this moment extremely formidable, and the success of their Irish expedition has not shown any remarkable improvement in the mode of invasions by descent. Their West India possessions depend in a considerable degree upon their intercourse with us, and may be lost by its suspension and a concert between us and Great Britain. But the result of all this will in their opinion only be to protract the war, and war is what they think they must have. With such people as these it is of little avail to be innocent or friendly; all mankind they are resolved shall, as their allies or their foes, become their prey.

. . . . . .

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, 10 February, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

As your favor of the 1st instant, which I received yesterday, mentions that General Pinckney intended to leave Paris the next day, I am in constant expectation of seeing him here. This last measure of ordering him away is so

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violent, that I take it for granted the Directory have determined to carry their experiment of terror through, cost what it will. My sincere and anxious desire that our country might have continued upon terms of good harmony with France, makes this circumstance a subject of deep concern and regret to me. For compliance on our part is impossible. The speech of the President as you observe has traced a course from which we cannot depart.[1] We know the value of the friendship of France, but we also know what is due to our own character and national independence, and as we once resisted alone and unsupported the whole power of Great Britain, to support it we shall deem every sacrifice cheap that may be necessary to maintain it, even against France.

Your opinions and arguments upon this subject as I should think must have weight, if reason and justice could be heard with impartial ears, and I am happy to find that you continue in the use of them. Coolness, candor and moderation should never despair, however discouraging their prospects of success; and when a struggle must take place, it is important to secure the advantage of having tried every honest expedient to avoid it.

I am afraid that the dependence of the West Indies upon us has not its due weight in the national councils. The memorial of Mr. Turgot, which I have often mentioned to you, laid it down as a settled point, that all the European nations must soon lose their American colonies, that such would be the event borne down by the irresistible nature of things, and that it was vain to think of avoiding it; at the same time it contends very strenuously to prove, that the colonies of *France* are a burthen and not a benefit, and that

[1] Washington's last annual message to Congress. See *Messages and Papers of the Presidents*, I. 203.

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the sooner she loses them, provided Great Britain loses hers too, the better it will be. From the manner in which the French government have conducted and still conduct towards their colonies, it would seem probable that this opinion of Turgot has become a ruling idea of their policy, or rather, that it has been extended further, and that they wish to see all the European colonies in America, not only lost to their owners, but totally ruined and destroyed. To say that this is a systematic folly and cruelty too extravagant to be believed, would be natural, but might not be just. Many of the proceedings during the Revolution were professedly defended upon the philosophical argument, that the population of France was too great by three or four millions. The reason of state has no feelings, and when the system is prevalent that the colonies *must* be sacrificed, the fate of their inhabitants is an object of very little concern.

Your other argument will naturally be more powerful. But in the wantonness of present plenty they do not contemplate the possible chance of a scarcity, at the very moment when they shall have compelled a suspension of our commerce with them. It is, indeed, very certain that a difference between the United States and France may have the most important and injurious operation upon the well-being of the French people; but, according to Barras, the Directory do not abase themselves to calculations of this kind. An embargo would undoubtedly be among our most natural defensive measures. It was tried for the short space of two months three years ago against Great Britain.[1] The French are frequently enough reminding us of our obligations to them. You and I know that upon the occasion of

[1] The resolution of Congress imposing the embargo bore date March 26, 1794. It continued in force for sixty days. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II. 173.

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the former embargo it was taken off, because the Minister of France had intimated that its operation would prove injurious to that Republic. It was at the very moment when the greatest distress for want of our provisions was impending upon France, and this consideration induced us to desist from the use of our most powerful defensive weapon against the British depredations. If arguments of generosity can move the French, they ought not to forget this indisputable fact, and they ought also to be reminded of it, when they tell us, as one of the reasons to justify their present system of depredation upon our commerce, that we have not used all our means efficaciously to prevent similar conduct from Great Britain.

While I am upon the subject of arguments addressed to French generosity, I transcribe a passage from an address of the National Convention to the President of the United States, adopted in December, 1792:

> Ils (la ligue des despotes) ont surcité des tempêtes contre nous jusques dans votre hémisphère; ils y ont soulevé nos iles, mais nos principes et nos armées vont achever d'y ramener le calme et la prospérité. Les États Unis y ont contribué, par les secours actifs qu'ils ont versé dans nos colonies au moment où la France, trop éloignée, ne pouvait leur prêter son appui. *Graces vous soient rendues généreux Américains, c'est une dette que la reconnaissance de la République Française acquitte avec une douce satisfaction.*

Thus the National Convention then pledged to us the gratitude of the French Republic, and if the promise now proves to have been vain, it is at least a very substantial remaining proof of the obligation. We know very well that this is one instance which they have formally recognized among innumerable others, that have been constantly given of the disposition universally friendly and obliging towards France of our government, as well as our people.

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And are we now in return to be insulted, plundered, menaced with war, because we have had but small means to avenge the injuries of Great Britain, and because of these small means, we ceased the employment of the most powerful, upon finding that it would bear hard upon France, and under the express intimations to that effect from her minister?

They tell us that Great Britain is a nation piratical upon principle, that her maxims are contrary to the rights of all neutral nations, and that she must be compelled to abandon them; but are they not sensible that by adopting the same practices they give a sort of sanction to the very principles which they reprobate, and put into the hands of their enemies the justification of their own example. Great Britain, whose naval superiority suffices for the general protection of her own commerce, will rejoice to see that of neutrals harassed, even by her enemy, and will be pleased to see France promoting British views, while she is losing all the good will and friendship of the neutrals to herself. Are these considerations, too, which the Directory will not condescend to calculate?

It is apprehended by some, that all the Americans in Paris will soon be ordered away, and indeed from the course which things appear to be taking, our country must be prepared for everything. As long as you are permitted to remain, I shall hope to hear from you as frequently as shall suit your convenience. Your information is always interesting, and may become at present peculiarly important.

I observe that Mr. Skipwith yet retains the title of Consul General. Do you know whether he still has any official intercourse with the French government? . . .

I remain &c.

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TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

THE HAGUE, February 11th, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

Since I had the honor of writing you I have been informed that about a year ago a workman in the sword manufactories at Sohlingen, a hilt founder by the name of Alte,[1] was induced in consequence of the unsettled and distressed situation of that part of Germany to go to America, and before he went had the sword made according to his own fancy, with the intention, as I understand, of presenting it to you upon his arrival in America, with the hopes that it might serve him as a recommendation of himself. His father is living, and received a letter from him last May informing him of his arrival at Philadelphia. But since that time he has had no further accounts from him. He professes not to remember particularly the tenor of the inscription upon the sword. Its value might be from four to five pounds sterling.

As this letter will not come to your hands until after the period which you have fixed upon for retiring from the Chief Magistracy of the Union, I cannot omit the opportunity of expressing the deep concern which, in common with every virtuous American citizen, I have felt upon being informed of your resolution, and the veneration and gratitude with which, as one of the people of the United States, I received your address to them, dated on the 17th of September last. I fervently pray that they may not only impress all its admonitions upon their hearts, but that it may serve as the foundation upon which the whole system of their future policy may rise, the admiration and example of future time; that your warning voice may upon every great emergency

[1] Theophilus Alte. Ford, *Wills of George Washington and his Immediate Ancestors*, 108.

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recur to their remembrance with an influence equal to the occasion; that it may control the fury of domestic factions and check the encroachments of foreign influence; that it may cement with indissoluble force our national Union, and secure at once our dignity and our peace.

I beg leave at the same time to offer you, Sir, the tribute of my grateful acknowledgment for the distinguished notice which, in the course of your public administration, you were pleased to bestow on me, by the repeated nomination to places of honor and trust under the government of the United States, to places so far beyond any pretensions or expectations of mine, that they had never been even the subject of a wish, until your favorable opinion called me to them. I cannot deem it improper at this moment to express the gratitude which I must ever feel, and as I know that the only acceptable return for favors of this nature will in your mind consist in the zealous and faithful discharge of the public service which you were pleased to assign, I shall always consider my personal obligations to you among the strongest motives to animate my industry and invigorate my exertions in the service of my country.

With the most ardent wishes and prayers that the remainder of your life may be as replete with personal and domestic happiness to yourself, as it has hitherto been with benefits to your native land, with usefulness to the world, and dignity to the human character, I have the honor to be most respectfully, &c.[1]

[1] "For the kind expressions which you have extended to me, and the approbation of those sentiments I took the liberty of submitting to my countrymen, in my late valedictory, I have a grateful sense, and thank you for communicating them; as the approbation of good and virtuous men is the most pleasing reward my mind is susceptible of, for any service it has been in my power to render my country." *Washington to John Quincy Adams*, June 25, 1797. Ms.

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TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, February 16, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I have formerly noticed that, when a report had spread in Paris that the Directory had resolved to suspend all intercourse with the government of the United States until their causes of complaint should be removed, the fact was *denied from authority* in their official newspaper. This new order to General Pinckney has not been announced in any of the Paris daily prints, and the French Minister here has declared in answer to inquiries upon the subject, that it cannot have taken place, for that he has had no notice of it, as he certainly should have were the account true. Of the fact I have not the least doubt; but I mention the secrecy and mystery which is observed on this occasion as a remarkable circumstance, which ought to be known to you.

It seems to be understood that the French government have determined to arrest and intercept all our commerce to and from the ports under the dominion of Great Britain. I have conversed with several intelligent men here, engaged in the public affairs at this time upon the subject. They do not hesitate in conversation with me to avow that they approve this policy; they say that the loss of the American commerce will compel Great Britain to make peace. As to the injustice of the thing towards us, they tell me with the utmost coolness imaginable that rigorous justice is not always practicable among nations, and that when policy prescribes a certain system, it cannot be expected that great regard will be paid to the rights and interests of a neutral nation which has no force to resist an attack upon them. Upon the point of *justice* I have not yet met a single man who

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after discussion has not abandoned entirely the argument. But I have scarcely met one who scrupled at avowing his opinion that the plan contemplated by the French government is expedient. . . .

I have ever since my residence in Europe had applications of various kinds from the friends of M. de la Fayette.[1] They have been extremely desirous that the American government should make a formal and public application for his liberation, either directly to the Imperial government, or through that of Great Britain. As it was a subject upon which I never had any instructions from the President, or the Department of State, and as I have always been fully convinced that the measures solicited would not be expedient, and could not be of any service, I have always avoided an interference in the matter. Unfortunately many of M. de la Fayette's friends have proceeded with much more zeal and vehemence than discretion, judgment, or delicacy, in the endeavors to procure his liberty. The conduct in particular of Lally towards Mr. Pinckney was such as certainly could not *serve* the cause of his friend. For my own part I have been disposed to make every allowance for indiscretion in consideration of the purpose which has always had my most cordial wishes in its favor. I have very recently received from Hamburg a letter,[2] wherein I am again requested to suggest and urge the propriety of an *ostensible measure*, that is a public application from the government of the United States to that of Great Britain, to solicit the liberation from the Emperor. The reason now alleged is, that if the United States do not claim the prisoner now, France very soon will, for that a surprising alteration has taken

[1] For a petition on this subject sent to Adams by the Americans in the Netherlands, 1796, see *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, XLVI. 237.

[2] From René Pillet.

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place in the public opinion of France with regard to M. de la Fayette, and that it is now highly in his favor; and that the Emperor by giving him up now to the application of the American government, will only be spared the mortification of being compelled to yield him to the claims of France. I have engaged to transmit this idea and its reasons to America; but I have expressed my unequivocal conviction that what is desired cannot and ought not to be done.

I am &c.

FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

[TIMOTHY PICKERING]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
PHILADELPHIA, February 17, 1797.

SIR:

I have the honor to inclose your Commission as Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States to the Court of Portugal, together with your letter of credence to that Court, your letter of recreance to the Government of the United Netherlands, and copies of both. Your successor at the Hague will be forthwith appointed, and he may be expected to proceed thither as soon as he can get ready for the voyage. This you will be pleased to make known to the Government of the United Netherlands, of which the President desires you to take leave in the most friendly manner.

It has ever been a desideratum to gain admission for our flour into the ports of Portugal: but it seems there are too many interested in its exclusion by the advantages they derive from manufacturing our grain, to authorize the hope of a speedy change: it is nevertheless an object meriting your attention.

Colo. Humphreys was desired to gain, if practicable, some certain information of Brazil. Although the usual policy of European nations, and particularly of Spain and Portugal, tends to the exclusion of foreign vessels from their American colonies, yet so far

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as they depend on the United States for supplies of the articles most necessary to the planters and other inhabitants, either for food, for building, or for the exportation of their produce, a direct trade with us would evidently be most beneficial to them as well as to us. Spain, for instance, excludes our vessels unless furnished with licenses from her public agents here: the consequence is, that the colonists pay nearly two prices for their flour. At other times our flour is carried to Cádiz, and thence in Spanish vessels to the colonies. In both cases the general interests of the colonists and of the mother country are sacrificed to the emolument of a few agents and monopolists.

I do not know whether any thing similar exists in the colonial regulations of Portugal. There has never been, as I have heard, any intercourse between the United States and Brazil: yet the climate and produce of at least a very large portion of that extensive country must be such as to render supplies of some species of provisions, particularly bread, as necessary to the inhabitants, as to those of the West India islands. And hence I presume that those provisions, particularly flour, are transported thither from Portugal — flour made of American wheat. But we are too little acquainted with the trade, culture, and wants of Brazil to form any just conclusions. The subject will merit your attention.

There have been complaints of unwarrantable fees taken by our consuls in Portugal and her European islands. The consular law prescribes no fees except for making out and authenticating certain papers. At Lisbon, Madeira and Fayal, the consuls have been in the practice of taking fees for other objects which they are willing to have understood as necessary or very useful to the masters and supercargoes of our vessels, and for which they demand of each eight or ten dollars. We have not heard of similar claims elsewhere: nor are we well informed of the nature of the services referred to. You will be pleased to investigate the matter and communicate the result.

The consulate at Lisbon is in a very unpleasant situation. Mr. Church has been long absent, and the management of the office

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does not appear to be in very fit hands. Col. Humphreys has been written to on the subject, and it is hoped the mischiefs complained of have been remedied or put in a train of removal. This matter also will claim your attention.

I have only one thing more to mention at this time. The President desires that while you attend generally to the objects which interest the United States in relation to Portugal, you will particularly inquire into those by which our commercial intercourse may be extended. The condition and circumstances of Portugal and of the United States naturally incline them to cultivate peace with all the world: they therefore seem well adapted to form friendly and useful connections with each other, unembarrassed by fears or jealousies on either side. Perhaps this disposition may be cultivated to our mutual advantage, especially in extending our commercial relations. . . .[1]

The negotiations with the powers of Barbary having been under the direction of Colo. Humphreys, who was duly instructed for the purpose, he will continue of course to conduct them. It is hoped they are drawing to a close. Should he at any time need your aid in any respect, you will have the goodness to render it: and unasked communicate to him any information that you receive which you may deem useful. I am, etc.

TIMOTHY PICKERING.

PRESIDENT WASHINGTON TO JOHN ADAMS

Monday, 20 February, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

I thank you for giving me the perusal of the inclosed. The sentiments do honor to the head and heart of the writer; and if my wishes would be of any avail, they should go to you in a *strong hope*, that you will not withhold merited promotion from Mr. John Adams because he is your son. For without intending to compliment the father or the mother, or to censure any others, I give it as

[1] The omitted paragraphs relate to outfit and salary.

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my decided opinion that Mr. Adams is the most valuable public character we have abroad, and that there remains no doubt in my mind that he will prove himself to be the ablest of all our diplomatic corps.

If he was *now* to be brought into *that* line, or into any other public walk, I could not, upon the principle which has regulated my own conduct, disapprove of the caution which is hinted at in the letter. But he is already entered; the public more and more, as he is known, are appreciating his talents and worth; and his country would sustain a loss, if these were to be checked by over delicacy on your part. With sincere esteem and affectionate regard, I am, ever yours,

GEO. WASHINGTON.[1]

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, February 23, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

General Pinckney and his family have arrived at Amsterdam, but as I have not seen him I presume he did not pass through this place. On the other hand Mr. Monroe has arrived in Paris, upon his return from his tour through this country. What was the cause of Mr. Pinckney's being ordered to leave France is yet unknown. But the conduct of the French government and its dependents at the same time towards Mr. Monroe, and his conduct towards them, give me serious uneasiness. The views and designs which these circumstances seem to indicate are of a nature so important to the Constitution and even to the union of our country, that I cannot but feel anxious to discover how far they really extend, and cannot but observe with concern the apparent concert of an internal American party with the

[1] This letter, reproduced in facsimile, is in *Writings of John Adams*, VIII. 529. Washington's letter was called out by the despatch of November 14, 1796.

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present government of France to overthrow that of the United States.

You will doubtless before this reaches you be informed of official communications made to me from this government in the course of the last autumn, which I then transmitted to the Secretary of State, wherein they formally, without disguise or hesitation, call upon the United States to violate their treaty with Great Britain, go to war with her and make a *common cause* with the French and Batavian Republics. Such probably is still the intention of the French Directory. But as at present they totally despair of effecting their purpose by negotiating with our executive government, they will probably turn all their efforts towards the House of Representatives. The act of June 5, 1794,[1] against which Adet complains so indecently, expires with the present session of Congress. This is the law of which Fauchet in his dispatch No. 3 says, that Randolph told him "A bill had passed the House of Representatives which *wounded liberty*." An indisputable proof of it is the next clause of the dispatch, which represents Randolph as adding, "They have at least taken away the article which prevents the sale of the French prizes in our ports." Fauchet in his plastering certificate pretends that this passage of his No. 3 refers to a conversation which he had with Randolph in April, 1794, and that it related to the political divisions in different parts of the United States, and to a bill which *gave the executive* powers that might be abused and wound liberty. The impudence with which this story is told, when the clause about the taking away the article relating to the sale of prizes comes so immediately after in the dispatch, is not one of the least curious particulars in the strange publication

[1] "An act in addition to the act for the punishment of certain crimes against the United States."

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of Randolph. The clause about the sale of prizes was struck out on the 2nd of June, 1794, and Fauchet certifies that the conversation was the April before. In *fact* from the internal evidence of Fauchet's dispatch, compared with Adet's last note, it is clearly the seventh section of the Act of June 5, 1794, which was so extremely obnoxious to Mr. Randolph, and at the same time is so to the French government. Under these circumstances the *attempt* to pass an imposition upon the public as to the object of their conversation, is itself deserving of attention. Why was there any desire of disguise in this particular? Why, but because Mr. Randolph's confidences with Mr. Fauchet upon subjects to which the same seventh section naturally leads the contemplation, were such as it was judged unfit to disclose. This seventh section is indeed an important thing, and I am not a little curious to see how it will be treated in the House of Representatives, when the law is to be continued, that is in the course of the present session.

What expedition or enterprise there may be views of carrying on from the territories of the United States against the dominion of another sovereign, I am not qualified to say. France is at this time not only at peace, but in close alliance, with Spain. But neither peace nor alliance are complete or effectual guards against projects of invasion or revolution. There is no doubt but that the French in their negotiation for peace with Spain endeavored long to obtain a cession of Louisiana, and have since the peace been equally solicitous to receive it in exchange for the part of St. Domingo, which was ceded to them. You will observe, both in one of the Paris papers which I have lately sent, and in the *Leyden Gazette*, an article of news published at Paris as coming from Madrid, that an inevitable revolution is upon the point of taking place in Mexico, and that the people there will soon shake off

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the yoke of Spain. The pretence that this disposition is fomented by the English may be true or false, the material object of observation is the paragraph itself, and the quarter from whence it comes. You best will know whether I am merely fanciful in combining it with Genet's arrival at Charleston, and his intended expedition at that period, together with the various other symptoms that have appeared down to a certain letter to Col. Thomas Fulham, a North Carolinian, which I find in the American newspapers of the last summer, and to the return of the same Colonel Fulham to France, immediately after the ratification of the treaty with Great Britain. He called to see me as he went through this place, and told me that he was the bearer of many letters for Mr. Monroe from Mr. Madison and his other friends. The part of the President's address to the people applying particularly to the inhabitants of our western states and territory, indicates the evidence of a plan advanced to considerable maturity. An obscure outline of a vast plan calculated exactly for the French meridian, suitable at once to their ambition and their jealousy, discovers itself in these various incidents. If this plan really exists in the *extent* which may be rationally suspected, the seventh section of the act of June 5, 1794, is a very important obstacle to views for conducting expeditions against the *territories* of a foreign power with which we are at peace.

But however that may be, it is certain there is another plan, with the success of which the other part of this section is totally incompatible, and that is, the plan for suspending totally the commerce between the United States and Great Britain. This design, which ever since the middle of the last summer there has been strong and increasing reason for suspecting, is now in a manner openly avowed, notwithstanding the ambiguity which pervades all their official

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papers on the subject, and which indicates nothing more than the view of retreating from the system in case they should find it impracticable, with a pretence that they never adopted it.

To carry it into effect they have two different modes of proceeding, the one by producing a war between us and Britain, and the other by making a sort of war upon us themselves, and forcibly intercepting all our navigation to and from British ports, at least as far as they can. But this seventh section is an impediment equally to both their processes. It prevents them from carrying on a privateering trade by means of our own citizens, which would be altogether inconsistent with neutrality, and which, if not suppressed, would at once harass the commerce and provoke a state of hostilities; and at the same time it takes from *them* the means of intercepting forcibly the navigation to and from British ports, by depriving them of the means of keeping a line of privateers along the whole extent of our own coast, which should be ready to meet every vessel which they should choose to stop, upon its entering into or issuing from the several ports. To them this is an essential object; for our navigation with British ports could not be forcibly interrupted to a very material degree, but by arresting the vessels at the moment of departure or of arrival. This they cannot do in the European seas, because the British naval superiority keeps them generally clear, and a privateer or frigate seldom has a choice of picking up more than a single vessel or two before it is itself taken. Neither can they do it upon the American coast while they are prevented from fitting out their privateers in our own ports, and while our citizens find their property protected by the jurisdiction of our own tribunals. The consequences, therefore, of an unrenewed expiration of this law are in every point of view so momen-

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tous, that I consider it as one of the principal purposes for which they are now undertaking to negotiate *with* the House of Representatives *against* the *Executive* of the United States.

At present, I am told here, that it is not desired that we should go to war with England, that it would even not be for the interest of France that we should. I have conversed repeatedly with the persons upon whom the principal executive functions of the foreign affairs rest, and have urged to them the obvious and inevitable consequences *to this country* of a war between the United States, and either France or Great Britain. Some of them I have reason to believe are alarmed. The merchants, the renters, have already perceived the effects of the mere prospect which is threatened, and I know that *they* are alarmed. The *disposition* therefore here is right. I am even told that the French Directory will not pursue their system to an absolute rupture, and a *hint* has been given me that Adet's powers will be renewed, to discuss the differences which have arisen, or rather that the suspension of his functions will be removed. But all this may be intended as merely a cloak to conceal designs of hostility, and prevent a state of preparation to guard against them. The measure of ordering Mr. Pinckney away is so violent in its nature, that it is absolutely necessary to consider the Directory as determined upon proceeding to every extremity for the purpose of carrying their points in America. As it is unquestionable that the ruin of our commerce and a war with Britain are involved in these points, I cannot suppose that the government of the United States will submit, and I must, therefore, recur to an idea which I have heretofore suggested, that is, the importance of a cool, moderate, and candid statement to the world of the real situation of our differences with France. The notes of Adet, and most especially the speech of Barras to Mr. Monroe when he

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delivered his letters of recall, start pretensions of superiority on the part of France and of *dependence* on that of the United States, which *must* be resisted and refuted. Instead of which, it is painful to say it, Mr. Monroe himself in his speech gives them countenance and encouragement, by talking of *generous assistance* which never was given, and which their own official documents have long since disproved.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, March 3, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

Mr. Pinckney is at Amsterdam, but has not yet been here. I hope to see him however before long. The reasons for which he was ordered away are still to me perfectly mysterious. You mention that nothing further is to be done against the country and people, and that perhaps Adet may be charged with having exceeded both in manner and substance his instructions. Adet's language is indeed such as could not fail to rouse resentment, and deeply wound spirits of obtuser sensibility than ours; but it is much less offensive than that of Barras, the President of the Directory, and more remote from positive hostility than an order to depart the territory given to a public minister.

The only manner in which the various measures of the French government can be accounted for is, upon the supposition that they have vowed the destruction of the American government, and are desirous to ascertain whether the American people will assist them in the laudable work. If not, the people will share their animosity with the government, and both will be forced into a war. I cannot ex-

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press how much concerned I am at the prospect that such is the determined policy of France. But my concern is for my country, and for the interests of humanity. As for the American *government*, it is perhaps best that the attachment of the people to it *should* be brought to the test, for as it rests upon no other foundation, if that *can* be taken away by any other cause than its own misconduct, it is not the government proper for the people, and ought to fall. It will indeed be a crisis. But that is what in the present state of the world we must all be prepared for, and it often terminates in a manner very different from that intended.

The western insurrection two or three years ago was one of these experiments. Its issue was far from favoring the party that conducted it, and even the minister of France was reduced to the necessity of lamenting its ill success. If France will compel the people of America to choose between her and their own government, she may succeed it is true; but if she fails, as I believe she will, the result of the experiment will be similar to that of the insurrection. It will fix many a *changeable man*, and unfold to the face of day many a pretender to patriotism. The American government will not shrink from the necessary contest.

Paine's letter to the President I have not yet seen.[1] His sort of intermediate station, between the French govern-

[1] *A Letter to George Washington, President of the United States of America. On Affairs Public and Private*, 1796.

"There is something singular in the similarity between a great part of Paine's letter to the President and Adet's protest, and I really cannot help thinking that that high priest of calumny has had an influence in jaundicing the eyes of the French representation. How Mr. Monroe could be ignorant of his resentments, or how, knowing them, he could harbor the poisonous animal that was stinging our common benefactor and propagating by words and writings doctrines calculated to bring our government into contempt, our property into arrestation, and finally our country into a war, are things curious, and I hope that will one day see the light." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Havre, February 18, 1797. Ms.

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ment and Mr. Monroe, has long since been a subject of animadversion. It has, in the course of Heaven's ways to man, been God's pleasure sometimes to create human beings with mischievous powers more extensive than those of Paine, but none more malignant. Even Madam Roland thought him fit for nothing but destruction. In former publications he has acknowledged that Washington had been his personal friend and patron. This is doubtless the reason why he now reviles him. It was fit that he who, by all his servile adulation of Robespierre could only mitigate his measure of punishment from the guillotine to imprisonment, should now abuse his own benefactor, who uses neither Luxemburgs nor guillotines. There has been a school of philosophers who pretended that private vices were public benefits, but the school of Paine teaches something more. It makes the highest *public virtue* to consist in the most detestable private vices.

I shall be happy to hear from you as soon as may be concerning the result of the elections which are to take place in the course of a few days; but I confess I have not very sanguine expectations from them. Were it not for the hopes which all your late letters intimate upon this subject, respecting which you have means of information so much superior to mine, I should have no sort of confidence in the prospect of a change from that event. I am apprehensive in the first place, that a very unjust and ill-founded prejudice against the American government prevails throughout France. Mr. Paine is not the only man, who has been employed for years in raising and spreading such a prejudice. The work has been industriously and systematically pursued by deeper men than Paine, and he has only been one of their instruments. It has not been counteracted (I will not say it has been promoted) from quarters, whence it

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ought to have been most vigorously and strenuously opposed, and unless some circumstances should occur to remove it, I do not expect any system more favorable to us from a change of their men. In the next place, they all are of opinion that the Americans, who are always ready to sacrifice even the interests of their own country to the will of France, are those whom they must both support and believe, and all are perhaps too much convinced that it is their interest to connect their influence with the opposition to our government. These opinions have already lost them a great deal of their real influence in America, and they have made me the more desirous to see something done to show them in their real erroneous light.[1]

I am &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, March 4, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I mentioned in my last letter, an intimation I had received that Adet's powers would be renewed, to commence again the discussion of the differences between the French and American governments. Since then my suggestions from Paris are, that the Directory will for the present take

[1] "The opinion is here in general that the elections will be good; but I sincerely agree with you in the observation that most of the men in France have no regard to our country. But I think the new elections will bring forward wise and moderate men, who will be glad to fence round the Republique with a chain of treaties, both for their own fame and their love of country. Under the principle of our usefulness I expect their moderation, not from motives of our right, or their love of general liberty. We can hardly find an affectionate friend among the people of consequence: if of the old regime, they tremble at our example, and think we have done too much; if republicans, they think we did too little, and perhaps can grudge us liberty and laws, unmixed with sorrow for the means by which they were attained." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Paris, March 10, 1797. Ms.

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no further step detrimental to the American *people*, and that Adet will be charged with having a little exceeded his instructions, both in substance and manner. I feel it somewhat ridiculous to give you these little transient, accidental indications upon points which are perhaps perfectly clear from the information before you. Yet at worst I hope it will only be my loss of labor and time, without injury anywhere.

The most unaccountable circumstance to me, in the present state of affairs, is the refusal to receive Mr. Pinckney, and the order given him to leave France, if as they pretend they do not mean an absolute rupture. The only manner in which I can explain it is by the supposition that they are trying to force the American government upon a reappointment of Mr. Monroe.

The appeal to the people, though not formally declared as in the time of Genet, who found it necessary in that instance to deny his own words, is, however, very clearly and systematically undertaken. No further violent measures are to be pursued, until it shall appear whether the people will support their government under the menaces of French resentment or not. Will you forgive me for intimating it again as an object of increasing conviction upon my mind, that all these measures are concerted with a very powerful and influential party among ourselves, and that there are symptoms which make me very uneasy both as to the extent of the views which this concert embraces, and the persons engaged in it. When the passions of men have conducted them to such a point that they negotiate a war against their own country, I cannot imagine any boundaries at which they will stop.

The immediate system which will be pursued by this combination seems clearly to be this, to set the House of Rep-

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resentatives in Congress at opposition with the Executive government. It has already been pursued with considerable success. It appears that the present House will be composed in a great measure of the same members as the last. The attempt to assume executive powers does not appear to have met with general approbation on the former occasion. I hope it will not be renewed.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, March 9, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

That there has been a vast deal of error and misrepresentation, with regard to the opinion of the American people, is beyond a doubt, and unfortunately the reports and statements to the French government have all come from biassed sources. All their ministers, from the time of Genet, have been misled by connecting themselves with a party opposed, either to the Constitution, or to the administration of our government, and who had interests of their own to answer, by instilling prejudices in the minds of the French ministers. Listening to leaders of Jacobin clubs, and catching at every paltry paragraph in a newspaper which combined abuse upon the government with a parade of enthusiasm for France, they have never sufficiently attended to that cool and deliberate public opinion, which has never yet failed to determine eventually the American measures, and to defeat which, every expedient has been repeatedly tried, and as constantly has failed. Whether the accredited minister of the United States in France, or other officers, have not been themselves too much under the influence of a party spirit

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opposed to their own government, to make their representations in the name and behalf of that government zealous and active, as it might and should have been, may at least be a subject of doubt, and if their conduct, instead of exhibiting the ardent desire to justify their government, and to maintain its harmony with that to which they were sent, has on the contrary been a continued series of censure upon the measures of their own employers, it is not to be supposed that they have contributed, in any degree, to remove prejudices, which they so fully participated. Indeed I know not of a single opportunity that the French executive have had to hear the truth stated to them with candor respecting American affairs. The dispositions which some of our own countrymen have manifested, to buccaneer and plunder upon the property of their fellow citizens, is indeed a disgrace to the nation. But that such men, despised and detested by their own countrymen as much as they deserve, should be listened to as designating the public opinion of that very country which they have renounced, and which has renounced them, is much to be regretted, though I much fear that it has been and yet is the case.

You mention an opinion that they begin to take into their calculation some of these things in the councils, if not in the Directory. But how is it intended to renew a discussion with our government, which has been so thoroughly cut off by the suspension of their minister's functions at Philadelphia, and their refusal to receive the American minister at Paris. It is impossible for the proceedings of one nation towards another, to be more offensive than those of the French government have been for the last five months towards us; it is impossible that they should mean a continuance of peace, unless they mean also to renew the intercourse, which they have violently stopped, and which I cannot possibly

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think the American government will first renew. Do you know, therefore, whether they mean to restore the powers of Adet? Or to send any other person in his stead? If you have any indication for an opinion upon this point, I shall be obliged to you to let me know it.

It is true, as you observe, that the Americans, who in case of a rupture between the two countries, would take the French side, would not have the same chance of payment in case of failure as our refugees had from Britain. But it may be a subject of consideration to the French, that there would in such case be many and many a *claim* of indemnity for sacrifices made in their *cause*, and that every *encouragement* now given to such people will be turned into an obligation for supporting such claims. Our Loyalists, as they were called in the contest with Great Britain, were very much like the party which France now countenances and believes. They affected a superior, or rather an exclusive, attachment to the British government; they labored constantly to inspire prejudices against the rest of their countrymen in the minds of their patrons; flattered and irritated all their resentments, spurred them on to the war, and after it was over, called for compensation as having sacrificed everything in the British cause. The claim was found so equitable that they obtained it: not that the British government thought themselves bound to make good the losses of their subjects in the war; no such principle was ever admitted or pretended. No: but because they had encouraged these people in their opposition to the general interests and measures of their countrymen; because they had allowed and confirmed their pretensions of being their friends, and had thereby led them to make such sacrifices unavoidable. It is far from impossible but that France may conduct in the same way, and the example is

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worthy of consideration by those who are at the head of affairs.

There is an opinion, which has been very artfully and industriously circulated by our most inveterate antifederalists and Jacobins, that there are persons in our government inclined towards the English interests, an English party. You know with how much perseverance such a partiality was attributed to Mr. Hamilton, and has since been to President Washington himself. To him alone could Barras intend to make the application of his insulting innuendo, about the condescension of the American government to the suggestions of their ancient tyrants. It is, I am thoroughly convinced, all a party manœuvre, a trick perfectly understood by all French public men; a *tactique*, as they call it, to make their adversaries unpopular by fixing upon them odious imputations. There is not one man in the American government that has any partialities towards Great Britain, but there is a great English influence acting among *the people* of America, an influence, which by wise and prudent measures may be diminished, but which cannot, and will not, be violently rooted out, because deeply involved and indissolubly connected with our own interests. This influence it has doubtless been the policy of the American government to check, to control, and to weaken; it will still be their policy, unless France by her rashness, and insolence, and impetuosity make it absolutely necessary to sacrifice that object, and to encourage the British influence. But indeed if we are compelled to look upon France as an enemy, we shall not find it difficult to obtain a much closer friendship with Britain than we have ever had, much closer than I, or any American friendly to France, desires. By forcing a rupture upon us, France necessarily assimilates and unites the *interests* of America with those of Great Britain; an

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union of interests inevitably produces intimacy of connection, and after discharging us from all the obligations of our treaty with her, by the formal renunciation of its stipulations on her part, France may finally discover what a difference there is in a treaty between us and Britain, securing all the preferences which we had before stipulated for France, and a treaty in which the same or similar preferences would be secured to her rival.

We are all fully sensible how important it is for us to preserve the friendship of France, but if France, presuming upon the disposition which is universally prevalent among us, should think us ready to give up everything to her good-will and pleasure, she will find to her cost, as well as to ours, that we do not *depend* upon her either for our liberty or our independence. The result of her measures will be to cast away a valuable friend, a faithful ally, and to strengthen her own enemy by so powerful an accession.

Your arguments and calculations that we could subsist without any navigation of our own are certainly just, and I hope will be properly weighed. But a war with France would by no means suspend our navigation; it would not even to a considerable degree diminish it. The only consequence would be, that instead of its trading directly with all Europe, it would principally center in the trade with England. French privateers might infest it more or less, and it would be burdened with a heavier load of insurance than it is at present. But Great Britain would be prompted by every possible inducement to protect it, and the result would only be to promote her object of grasping all commerce into her own hands or within her own dominions.

I am &c.

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TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, March 18, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

We have not yet any authentic account concerning the issue of the American elections. That which is current and which I gather from the public newspapers states the choice of President as being ascertained, and that Mr. Jefferson is Vice President. A report prevails that he will serve in that office, which I cordially hope to be true, because I still confidently trust that the purposes which may exist in such a case, to divide and set in opposition against each other the two first officers of the Union will be disappointed. The welfare, the dearest interests of a common country are at a stake. I am sure that their benefit and security will be your only object. I firmly hope and believe they will also be that of your old friend and fellow patriot. This harmony, and that of the American people in general, is becoming as necessary as it was at the period of our Revolution. The French government at present evidently design to go to war with the United States, unless the Americans will submit to sacrifice their interest, their honor, and their independence. To effect this design, their great expectation is founded upon the hope of our internal disunion, a hope which is very much encouraged by the Americans who are conversant with the ruling men in France.

The determination for the present is to take, and perhaps to condemn, all American vessels and merchandise bound to or from any ports under the dominion of Great Britain. This system has long been discoverable, but is now openly avowed. Upon this principle they already have taken and condemned several vessels going from England. The privateers which took them have generally been fitted out

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by Americans, and it is from such specimens that the Directory judge of the dispositions and characters of the American people.

One of the objects to which this system is destined is plunder. They consider the American commerce as a beneficial prey, and they are desirous for a pretext to refuse the payment of about forty millions of livres, which as I understand they owe to citizens of the United States. That they are seeking pretexts for a quarrel is plain from every circumstance that has happened since the notes of Mr. Adet in October of the last year. But they gradually proceed from one step to another, because the Directory have not by the Constitution the right of declaring war, and they do not think the nation, or the Legislative Assembly, yet sufficiently exasperated against us, to make a proposal to declare war for the present pass. In order to produce such an animosity they are daily using every means of misrepresentation and falsehood against the American government; at the same time they are offering every provocation of insult, indignity and injury in their power, depending either that no power exists on our part to resent them, or if they are resented that our measures will furnish them pretexts for further insolence, and perhaps for proposing to the legislature a declaration of war. . . .

I expect to receive in a few days an official paper from the Committee of Foreign Affairs. It will be formed altogether upon a French model, and consequently cannot be satisfactory to the American government. I have already intimated to you what would be the inclination and what is the necessity of the governing party here. In private conversation with me they freely confess that they are obliged to follow the pleasure of France, though fully sensible of its being highly detrimental to their own interests.

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The temper of the times may be judged of from the treatment experienced by your old friend at Leyden.[1] His principles being those of genuine liberty, tempered with the love of order, of religion and morality, without which it cannot exist, and his spirit possessing that independence which they cannot subdue, they have not only neglected to employ his talents, which they would have found so useful, but they have harassed him with every sort of persecution in their power, dismissed him from his professorship, and endeavored to suppress the freedom of his paper. They are still watching every opportunity for a pretext to silence it entirely. The public opinion, which they use every possible exertion to pervert, but which strengthens against them in proportion to their efforts to subdue it, is at present his only protection. The press here is in fact under a rigorous inquisition. In France it is much more free; but the Directory are indefatigable in their endeavors to obtain a law which shall surrender it to their discretion. Hitherto they have not succeeded. . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

[Oliver Wolcott]

The Hague, March 24, 1797.

Sir:

. . . . . .

I have had in the course of it, abundant proofs of the aversion which the gentlemen at Amsterdam bear to the introduction of any course of exchange from this country directly to America. They have often assured me that such bills could not be negotiated, and I have reason to believe that they endeavored in this instance, though in such a guarded manner as to secure themselves from every imputation, to

[1] Johan Luzac.

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discredit my bills. Indeed, Sir, it is a subject worthy the serious consideration of the government, how far the interests of these gentlemen now tend to make every species of embarrassment in the administration of the American Treasury a desirable object to them. The time has undoubtedly been when their interests had a contrary tendency, when all the motives of personal impulse concurred with the sense of duty, to make them use every exertion to facilitate the operation of our finances. But at present there are many things that point towards a different direction. I have heretofore mentioned that they have always been dissatisfied with the law for discharging the principal of the six per cent stocks. Every discharge of capital upon the debt of the United States here is a diminution of profits to them. Any mode of payment which takes away the charges of their commissions cannot be favored by them. There is another fact which I presume is known to you, but which I shall mention, leaving to your reflection the consequences which it easily *may* involve. Mr. N. van Staphorst is a member of the Batavian National Assembly and of the *Committee of Finance*. He is understood generally to be the efficient member for the administration of the finances of this country. Mr. J. van Staphorst constantly resides at Paris, and as I understand has some considerable connection with the administration of the French finances. Mr. Hubbard resides at Amsterdam and manages the business of the House, which is frequently and profoundly speculating in the funds of the three nations.

It may be added because the circumstances at the present moment is of weight that both the Messrs. van Staphorst are by their situation, as well as by their political opinions, impressed with dispositions conformable to the views and policy of the French government.

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It is not without considerable reluctance and long hesitation that I mention to you, Sir, circumstances of this nature. Motives of personal interest may exist in great force without having any improper sway, and it is possible that the capacity of deep speculators in every sort of public funds may be in the same persons left altogether distinct from that of agents to the government. The laws of the United States have viewed it as proper to make the two characters incompatible in the administration of the Treasury at home, and as it has not been judged necessary to extend the rule to their commissioners abroad, a sense of indispensable duty obliges me to give you notice of facts which indicate very powerful interests different from those of the United States, and the natural tendency of which is to produce a bias upon the mind and the conduct.

As a member of this government Mr. van Staphorst has been attacked by a pamphleteer for this combination of the two characters, as an individual merchant and administrator of the public finances, and his administration has been very severely censured as being founded as much upon the state of his private affairs as upon those of the nation. The pamphlet is indeed circulated secretly, and is said to be libellous; but it proves an opinion of incongruity to exist here concerning this particular, and however inaccessible in this instance the individual may be to any improper influence, it appears to me that upon general principles such a concurrence is attended with peculiar danger.

I have &c.

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TO THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY

[OLIVER WOLCOTT]

THE HAGUE, March 26, 1797.

SIR:

I have the honor to inclose herewith a paper containing a late decree of the French Executive Directory highly interesting to the United States.[1] It will undoubtedly reach you from other quarters earlier, but I am particularly induced to send it in this paper, because it is noticed in the letter from the bankers at Amsterdam of the 24th instant, among the copies likewise inclosed.

You will remark the anxiety of these gentlemen now to sell the 6 per cent in London as low as 89 per cent or lower. Their intimation in their last letter, that many of their fellow citizens here will send their American stocks to be sold in London, which will reduce the prices again there, and their allusion to an article in the *Rédacteur*, the official newspaper employed by the French Directory for their publications. I have not seen this article of the *Rédacteur* but I presume they consider it as proving the truth of a report spread about in public, that the Directory have determined to demand of the American government a *loan* of thirty or sixty millions of livres.

Whether the object of the French Directory is at all events to force the United States into a war with France, or to intimidate the government by an appearance of that kind, I am not able to determine; the one or the other is unquestionable.

But the sudden rise of our stock at the London market,

[1] An arrêt of March 2, 1797, which purported to modify the treaty of 1778 between the United States and France in a manner to conform to the stipulations contained in the Jay treaty. By requiring a certain form of ship's paper (rôle d'équipage) upon a model not hitherto in use, no American ship would be exempt from capture and condemnation.

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as well as here, is also very remarkable. They attribute it altogether to the run upon the Bank of England and the fall of the British stocks, but heretofore they have argued, that a decline in the prices of English funds, instead of raising, had a tendency to lower those of the United States, and the fact has hitherto turned out favorably to their argument. If, however, the stock of confidence in the British credit, occasioned naturally by the establishment of a compulsive circulation for bank notes, has produced the effect of raising the value of American paper, I have some other reason to believe that stock jobbing speculations of individuals concurred with it. I send you herewith several of the late papers containing the prices current at Amsterdam, that you may observe the periods of progressive appreciation by which our paper there has lately risen. In the last paper you will observe them fallen again about one-half per cent, owing probably to the effect of this publication in the newspaper inclosed. . . .

I have the honor &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, March 30, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

From a Boston *Centinel* of the 15th of last month one of my friends here has collected the information and communicated it to me, that a few days before the President and Vice President of the United States for the ensuing four years were proclaimed in form. I have myself from America neither letters nor papers later than the beginning of December.

I have sent both to the Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury the Rotterdam Dutch newspaper of the

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24th instant, of which I likewise inclose one with this letter. You may remark that it is a *French* publication in a Dutch print. Such a kind of publication is not usual in these papers. In this instance it was probably inserted for the purpose of depressing the price of our funds and raising that of insurance upon our vessels; the last effect it has produced to the amount of more than two per cent.[1]

But the principal subject of remark is the *arrêté* of the Directory itself. This contains nothing to surprise us, nothing but what we have long expected; but it will prove in a clearer light that concert with an American party which has so long been apparent to everyone that has had eyes and would see.

The objects of this *arrêté* are perfectly discernible, and indeed it appears to suggest the means of counteracting them by setting forth in the broad light of which it is susceptible both the pretext and the motive to the world in general.

The first object is to plunder the American commerce in general, and to suspend as much as they can that in particular which we have with Great Britain. The second is to throw the odium of these depredations upon the American government and upon the treaty between the United States and Britain. This last part of the policy they have certainly learnt from their American auxiliaries; even the first part was also instigated probably by Americans. There is a man who has been long and steadily busy in fomenting the animosities which would lead to this issue; who has effectually contrived to remove some of the ties of interest which kept the French if not within the bounds of moderation, at least within some bounds; who had the confidential ear and a sort of magic influence over the mind of our late Minister in France;

[1] When the intelligence of Pinckney's rebuff became known in the United States, insurance on American vessels sailing for France could not be obtained.

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who has since returned to America where I have no doubt but he is making himself busy and mischievous as usual, and whose stepson is now notoriously the nominal owner and fitter out of privateers from French ports which are preying upon the American commerce, under French colors, and under this system of the French Directory which they at this moment avow to the world.

What measures of defence and protection against the plundering project can be adopted I am very anxious to see. It is with the deepest concern that I observe such a conspiracy of robbery against our own countrymen carried on at the instigation of some of our own citizens. At the same time it appears to me that in the execution of the second object, that of deluding the minds and averting the resentment of the Americans, there is a want of address of which advantage may be taken to demonstrate the falsehood of the pretence and the reality of the purpose.

The Directory for instance quote three articles of our treaty with Britain, the 17th, 18th and 21st, which they say by virtue of the stipulation in the 2nd article in the treaty of February, 1778, have modified this treaty and must be understood as established equally between the United States and France.

In the third article of the *arrêté* therefore they say that the 1st regulation is founded upon the 17th, the 2nd upon the 18th, and the third upon the 21st of the articles quoted by them. But upon comparing the regulation with the article upon which it pretends to rest we find in the first instance the words "*ou non suffisamment constatée neutre*"; in the second the words "*ou indirectement*"; and in the third the whole rule in its generality and in particular the second clause of it have not the remotest connection with the stipulations upon which they would fain erect their basis. And

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proceeding one step further it appears very plain that those very words, those very *deviations* from the articles which they quote, contain the essence of the system upon which they intend to pursue the other object of plunder, so that for all the injurious and obnoxious part of the *arrêté* they might as well quote the treaty of Westphalia or of Utrecht, as the treaty of November 19, 1794. This attempt therefore to amalgamate their two distinct purposes is so awkward that I hope it will furnish the most effectual materials for its own defeat; that it will be pointed out and unfolded so indisputably and so simply to the judgment of our countrymen, as will tend to give that concert and union upon the want of which the present French system altogether is founded.

It is said Mr. Monroe is upon the point of his departure to return home, and I understand that he has frequent interviews with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs.[1] The report adds that he will charge himself with the terms which the Directory think proper to prescribe to the American government, and that among other proposals will be that of a loan by the United States to pay the debts of France to American citizens. I saw in a Philadelphia paper some time ago a piece of evidently Gallic composition and saying that there was nothing but water and milk in the veins of Americans! The Directory seem to entertain the same opinion.

The periodical journal which I send at present for the months of January and February will show that the conduct of France towards us is understood in Europe, and that it is seen in its true light. The pamphlet of Theremin I send not only as a curiosity but to show you how infamously they require their hirelings to lie. You see how he speaks of

[1] Monroe had taken formal leave of the Directory, January 1, 1797.

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Washington. This Theremin must be always considered as one of their drudges whom they employ for any of their filthy work; his miserable crudities are more interesting than they may at first sight appear, because they give the earliest indications of many future views of the ruling men. They take great pains to circulate his pamphlets through Europe, and I have found many of their threads of circulation in quarters where they are but little suspected.

. . . . . .

I remain &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, 31st March, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have at once to thank you for your favors of the 10th, 19th and 21st instants, and for the last work of Necker, which you had the goodness to send by Mr. Prince. Since receiving your letter of the latest date, I shall be very impatient to hear from you again. Conciliation between our government and that of France is, indeed, an important object, but important as it is I hope and depend, that it will never be sought or obtained but with honor and dignity. Experience however has fully proved that the most sincere and cordial disposition to harmonize on our part has been ineffectual, and after the returns which it has suffered, I cannot readily imagine any dispatches from America will be like to produce a favorable change.

The French government have indeed professed to make a distinction between our government and our people. This distinction is in truth equally offensive to both, and I am strongly confident that its result will be to unite the closer those whom it meant to divide.

I believe our countrymen have sense and sagacity enough

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to perceive, that the only party in this contest liable to be plundered is the people, and that by consenting to separate themselves from their government the only consequence to them will be to be more plundered.

Merlin de Douai [1] then is the man upon whose report the *arrêté* of the 12th Ventose was taken. The Minister for Foreign Affairs, too, gives a juster construction to the treaty. But is it not perfectly clear that in reality the treaty was out of the question when this *arrêté* was adopted?

It tells us that the treaty of 1778 was *modified* by the treaty of 1794. It quotes the 17th, 18th and 21st articles of the latter; declares that they are considered as binding between France and the United States, and then prescribes three regulations as resulting from them. But only take the pains to compare the *regulations* with the respective articles, and you will see what a prodigious difference there is between them in every instance; then by one single step further, observe that in this very difference consists the essence of the system declared by this *arrêté*.

For instance, the words "just suspicion" in the 17th article throw the burden of proof that captured property is *not* neutral upon the captor, and it expressly declares that none but property *belonging* to the enemy shall be confiscated.

But in the 1st regulation the words "non suffisamment constatée neutre" throw the burden of proof upon the proprietor, that it is *not* an enemy's, and makes even neutral property subject to be confiscated, unless proved neutral by special forms.

Again the 18th article makes articles serving *directly* to the equipment of vessels contraband. The second regulation proscribes as such, whatever is used directly or *indirectly* for arming and equipping vessels. Lastly the 21st

[1] Philippe-Antoine Merlin de Douai (1754–1828).

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article says, a person *accepting* a foreign commission or letter of marque for *arming* a vessel to *act as a privateer*, he may, if taken, be considered and treated as a pirate.

The 3d regulation is, that every known American *bearing* a commission (of any kind) given by the enemies of France, and not only so, but every American sailor making part of the crew of enemies vessels, shall be treated as a pirate, and not even be allowed the plea of violence, menaces, or *otherwise*. The last part of this rule, so far from being warranted by the article of the treaty, is even a step beyond the decree of the Convention commanding their armies to make no prisoners.

The pretence, therefore, that the rules of the *arrêté* are founded upon the articles of the treaty, reminds one of Crevier's representing the spirit of laws as originating in the bull unigenitus. But if you consider that the rules are to answer one purpose, and the quotation of the articles another, that the rules are to be the foundation for plunder, and the articles quoted for the sake of making the British treaty and the government of the United States odious to our people by charging upon them the blame of the depredations contemplated, all is at once explained. The artifice is very well conceived, but I think it awkwardly executed. The unpopularity of the treaty of 1794 was once a good weapon, and most prodigally was it employed. The present use of it seems more calculated to shiver the weapon itself, than to inflict the wounds it intends.

Your conjectures with regard to the Spanish policy may be well founded; but I do not believe that Spain approves or favors the present violent course pursued against us. There is not one *nation* in Europe, but what mixes a little envy and a little fear in their sentiments and opinions concerning us and our present affairs. All of them have that

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sort of feeling with which under the ancient régime an old nobleman looked upon a *parvenu*. This sort of jealousy it is our interest and our duty to soften and lenify by our moderation in prosperity, and especially by a rigorous regard to justice with all nations. But we must not hope entirely to remove it, and shall find ourselves sooner or later compelled to meet its worst. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, April 3, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

But there appears to prevail at present a design still more pernicious as it strikes directly at our national Union.[1] From the present conduct of the Directory it cannot be questioned but that they are determined upon a war with the government of the United States. There are also numerous proofs that in the prosecution of this war they are preparing to derive support from a part of the American people. The policy upon which they proceed appears to be this: that the Atlantic, or at least the eastern states, cannot be governed by the influence of France, and therefore that a southern republic must be formed in alliance with France to serve as a balance against the others. But in order to form this republic France must make war against the present government of the United States, in the progress of which she can send an army to support and assist her allies of the new republic, and hereby they will effect two purposes at once; that of weakening by division a rising power which they behold with suspicion and jealousy; and that of disencumbering themselves from a considerable portion of the army,

[1] He had called attention to Necker's *De la Revolution Françoise*, Section 1 of the first volume, and the possible indication of projects interesting to the United States.

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the return of which into France they already dread. They wish to form a republic in America as they are now forming a republic in Italy, to provide for the subsistence of their troops, or at least to be themselves rid of them; and thus you will observe that they step towards war with America regularly, as they step towards peace with the House of Austria. They are constantly in expectation of this peace, and it will probably be made in the course of this spring or the following summer.

In one of my late letters I wrote that they had no idea of sending an army to America, and I formed my opinion from the state of their marine and the impossibility they are under of restoring it for a long time. But various circumstances now lead me to a different opinion, and with respect to the marine, they are preparing to turn all their exertions towards it, as may be collected clearly from the pamphlet of Theremin which I sent you a few days ago.

You will find in the newspapers which I send at this time, that Thomas Paine has left Paris, and is going to America. Another of the French papers says that he is going with Mr. Monroe "*to repair the mischief done by the administration of Washington.*"

The plan of the Western Republic in alliance with France, to oppose against the rising Republic of the United States, must have been formed as early as the time of Genet's instructions. How much earlier it was formed it is perhaps not necessary to conjecture. That Paine was in the secret originally seems very probable. That he is now going to America to promote the design, I firmly believe. I see in some late American papers that he wrote to Bache last summer the necessity which the French government found themselves under to *distinguish between the American government and the people.* His pamphlet against the late President

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I have not seen, but am told that it is another edition of Adet's appeal to the people. What his conduct will be is easily foreseen. The French government calculate that in the war they intend, the eastern states will side with their government, but that our western country and perhaps the southern states will side with them. Paine therefore is going "*pour semer ses étincelles d'embrasement*," for which Madame Roland judged him so proper. Paine indeed is pursuing his vocation. He has no country; no affections that constitute the pillars of patriotism. But going with Mr. Monroe — where can the imagination stop in reflecting upon these things? Can Monroe? Can — I have done. I remember the late President's advice not to admit hastily suspicions against the designs of citizens in distant parts of the Union, and I will yet hope that a formal purpose to sever the Union into two parts, by the help of a French war against the whole, is at least not extensively intended or known; and that it will never meet with encouragement or support from men, who *ought* to consider the Union as the principle paramount to all others in the policy of every American.

I am &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 97 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

THE HAGUE, April 8, 1797.

SIR:

. . . . . .

The message of the President to the House of Representatives accompanying the documents relative to the state of our public affairs with France, mentioned in your last letter as then intended, is by the public papers here in France and in England announced as having been sent

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on the 19th of January; and in a couple of Boston newspapers, which have arrived here of a later date, I have found fragments of your letter to Mr. Pinckney answering the numerous complaints of Mr. Adet as minister of the French Republic.[1]

I am impatient to receive a copy of that very interesting publication, the need of which has long been impressed upon my mind. Every circumstance that has for several months occurred indicates a settled determination in the French Directory to produce a state of war between France and the United States. They have probably calculated how far the American government in such case will be supported by the people, and depend upon having as their auxiliaries and allies a certain part of the citizens of the Union. Their ultimate views, though not to be precisely conjectured, are discernible in their general outline. But it appears, that the Directory are restrained by the public opinion throughout Europe, which would unequivocally censure an immediate rupture with the United States by them. They keep, therefore, out of the public view their own offensive measures, and at the same time are using all possible means to give an erroneous direction to the public opinion concerning the American government. It seems important that some means should be used to counteract this policy, for if proper measures were taken to correct the falsehoods which are thus constantly publishing to the world, the most effectual control, perhaps the only one, over the warlike intentions of the Directory would not be lost.

I have the honor, &c.[2]

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, I. 559.

[2] "A rumor that the Directoire had laid an opposition on the treasury to all payments either to the American government or people, made me delay until the truth should be known. I went myself, and from Mr. De Clarck fils, the chief of the Comptability, received the assurance of its reality; and that it was grounded

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TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, April 30, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

A few days after the date of my last letter I received orders from the Secretary of State to take leave of this government and proceed upon the mission to Lisbon, and am now waiting only for an opportunity to go directly by a neutral vessel from Amsterdam. It was my earnest desire from motives of peculiar concern to myself to have taken my passage by the way of England, but various circumstances concur to make it necessary for me to abandon that design, and to postpone my domestic arrangements to a more remote and a more tranquil period.

One of my friends at Paris has sent me an extract from a Philadelphia newspaper of March 6, containing an account of the commencement of the new administration, and the speeches of the President and Vice President upon their installation in their respective offices.[1] It was impossible that anything should give me a more soothing hope, a more pleasing consolation, than the prospect of union and har-

on the law of reprisal. What we have taken or detained from them is not mentioned." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Paris, April 8, 1797. Ms.

"The opposition to the payment of any sums to America or Americans is founded on a claim made by the *Vengeur's* captain, for injuries sustained by a trial at New York. The Commissaries of the Treasury did not think the demand founded against individuals who never had seen the *Vengeur* or her prizes, and suggested their scruples. The Minister of Foreign Affairs upon this wrote them an official letter, supporting the ideas of the Directoire and the force of the opposition. Some of our countrymen are going to try the cause. The thing will make some noise." *Ibid.*, Paris, April 10, 1787. Ms.

"The opposition to American payments affects only sums coming from government, and is rather an angry than a hurtful measure. The dissatisfaction to America does not subside; the evil will not cure whilst the same people rule; but France sighs for peace." *Ibid.*, April 22, 1787. Ms.

[1] *Life and Works of John Adams*, IX. 105.

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mony between the two first officers of the government. Of your sentiments, indeed, I could need no formal declaration. I know them very well; but the solemn assurance given by Mr. Jefferson of his attachment to the Constitution, of his conviction concerning the importance of the Union, and of his esteem for you, gave me a satisfaction the more pointed, because I had seen all the attempts which have been so long and so variously pursued to set at variance and opposition two characters who have so often been united in rendering the most important services to the common country; and because I am profoundly convinced that there never was a time, or occasion, which more imperiously called for a concert of the talents, and virtues, and influence, of the most respected citizens throughout the Union, to meet the trials that are preparing for us, or rather that are at this moment bearing upon us.

The French Directory have followed up their *arrêté* of the 12th Ventose by others in a similar spirit, and among the latest is one forbidding any authority to recognize passports given by ministers of the United States.[1] Several captures and condemnations of vessels and cargoes, unquestionably American, have taken place. All the circumstances will without doubt be stated to you from the proper quarter. In the inclosed newspaper of the 24th there are several very important observations upon the subject, which I hope will not escape the notice of our only remaining public character at Paris.

General Pinckney has been here about ten days, and has freely communicated with me upon the state of affairs. The reason of the refusal to receive him is yet unaccounted for, and it is very plain that it was by some manœuvre which took place subsequent to his arrival. To trace that ma-

[1] Dated 21 Germinal, and notified to Adams by Noël, 29 Germinal [April 18].

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nœuvre to its *probable* origin is not difficult. I believe it was not French. Personalities of some kind or other were certainly concerned in it. Mr. Monroe has indeed enjoyed the favor of the French government constantly and to a very high degree. I have indeed been a little surprised to hear as coming from himself since his recall, that he had been treated for a long time with extraordinary coolness by them. This account is so different from all the unanimous accounts of the last summer, stating how highly he possessed their confidence; so different from all that I have constantly heard and seen, from the very direct evidence that has been displayed to me of their benevolence towards him and patronage of him, that I could not help supposing the coolness about which we are now told, to be represented as strongly as the reality could warrant. The Director Barras has indeed in a very formal manner declared their sense of Mr. Monroe's merits, and very explicitly shown what care had been taken by him to convince them how much he disapproved the measures and general policy of the government which he represented.

If I am not misinformed there was in this transaction, not only a favoring but also an *opposing* personal disposition. When Mr. Thomas Pinckney passed through Paris on his way to Madrid Mr. Monroe proposed to him to communicate the treaty with Great Britain (which was not then ratified and was agreed to be kept secret until ratified) to the Committee of Public Safety. Mr. Pinckney very properly declined making such a communication of what had been committed to himself in confidence. The Committee of Public Safety were at that time negotiating their peace with Spain. After that peace was concluded, and before Mr. Pinckney's treaty was signed, one of Mr. Monroe's intimate friends told me that Mr. Monroe had assured him from *his certain knowl-*

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edge, that the Committee of Public Safety, in their negotiation with Spain, had insisted upon the free navigation of the Mississippi *for us* as one of the conditions, until Mr. Pinckney passed through Paris without communicating to them the English Treaty; after which they immediately gave up that point and concluded their peace without it. I shall remark further, that *at that time* this story was told with some sort of ostentation: it was one of the most powerful means used to make the British Treaty odious to Americans in Europe. No slight pains were taken to impress this idea, that the British Treaty had lost us the navigation of the Mississippi, which would otherwise have been stipulated for us as a new benefit of France, and all this to the certain knowledge of Mr. Monroe. It so happened, however, that Mr. Pinckney made his treaty securing the said navigation of the Mississippi, not as a charitable donation from France, but as a fair bargain in our own right. But ever since that time Mr. Pinckney has been disliked by the French ruling men of the day, as some of his diplomatic predecessors were disliked for a similar fidelity to the interests of their country, by the ministers of the French monarchy. The Secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs here said to me the other day in conversation, that he had never heard anything indicating an opinion that General Pinckney's dispositions were unfriendly to France, but that his brother was said to be *anti-français*.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

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TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, May 2, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The conduct of the French consul at Algiers does not at all surprise me.[1] It is indeed true that there was abundance of declamation against England on this subject, though I never saw any sort of proof that England did interfere against us. But the worst treatment we have ever received from England since the peace of 1783 has been delicate friendship, in comparison with the conduct of the French governments. But there are upon the face of the earth a set of people, who may be called the bawlers and yellers. These have been employed since the commencement of this war, in everything relating to America, to sound their loudest peal, to swell every American complaint against England, and to drown every American complaint against France. Our countrymen will sooner or later learn that a peace with Algiers, or any other boon that they may enjoy under such a tenor as either French or English good will, is not worth the having.

The bankers and people in general (you observe) say the worst is over. They are probably themselves of that opinion. I am not.

I observe that the government papers are continually stuffed with falsehoods, to mislead the public mind and irritate it against the Americans. I wish I could see some such observations as must occur to every one acquainted with

[1] "One thing, however, is certain, that the French consul at Algiers is doing all in his power to break the treaty made with that Regency. We once with much reason loudly complained of England for something similar; the French government, who forever have the haughtiness and the crimes of that country on their lips, ought hardly to imitate them in one of their blackest deeds." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Paris, April 22, 1797. Ms.

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facts appear in other papers, to counteract such false and pernicious impressions.

With respect for instance to the *arrêté* of the 12th Ventose the observations, which I barely hinted at in one of my former letters, seem to be such as ought to be made to the public: under that *arrêté* they are taking, condemning, confiscating our vessels and cargoes, and if the Directory will not hear the voice of reason and justice, it can surely do no harm that the public should.

That *arrêté* is equivalent to a declaration of war, which the Directory cannot constitutionally make. It violates in the most flagrant manner not only the treaty of February 6, 1778, *but even the very articles of the treaty of 19th November, 1794, which it quotes for its justification.* . . .

It is a remarkable circumstance, that while the French republican rulers are accusing the American government of ingratitude for what they have not done, the emigrants and partisans of the House of Bourbon are reproaching them with the same crime for what they have done. "A Republic" (says Burke in one of his last pamphlets) "erected under his auspices" (speaking of Louis 16) "and dependent on his power became fatal to his throne, the very money which he lent to support this Republic, by a good faith, *which to him operated as perfidy*, was punctually paid to his enemies," etc.

Since I began this letter I have some of the Paris papers by the last post, in which I see some remarks upon the prospect of a rupture between the United States and France. They touch upon the matter of the flag very properly.[1]

Some of the French papers have announced *positively* the arrival of Mr. Madison at Paris as Envoy Extraordinary to settle the differences. I think it is impossible that this should

[1] Complaint was made that the French flag had not been hung in the hall of Congress.

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be true, especially as I have this day a letter from my brother of the 26th which mentions nothing of it. I should like to know how and where the report originated. It has long been whispered about that such an appointment had been made. Perhaps it is spread abroad as a hint. Perhaps as a delusion, to keep up an expectation of accommodation, until it shall be too late to retreat, or to examine into the conduct of those who are driving into war. There appear to me to be many symptoms of such a system and such a policy. I think good advantage may be made of the disposition which it so manifestly dreads.[1] Excuse the length of my letter, and believe me, &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, May 11, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I have before mentioned to you the accounts circulated, that Mr. Madison was appointed Envoy Extraordinary to France, and sent you the papers which announced his arrival at Paris. The present papers contradict that article, but repeat that he has been appointed. I suppose it is meant as a hint.

General Pinckney is still here, and has done me the honor to communicate with me in the most unreserved and confidential manner upon the state of our affairs with France.

[1] "I have not been able to divine the ultimate policy of this government with regard to us, for it surely makes war in every manner but the open declaration. I hear no mention of Mr. Madison's coming here as was once suggested, in order to open the door for negotiation and the establishing General Pinckney in his place." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, April 22, 1797. Ms. Hamilton had suggested to Washington, as early as January 22, 1797, the nomination of an extraordinary commission to France to consist of Madison, Pinckney, and Cabot. *Writings of Alexander Hamilton* (Lodge), VIII. 445.

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He has also desired me to say to you, that it is his wish that no scruple whatever as it regards him may impede the appointment of Mr. Madison, or of any other person, who may be more like to succeed in arranging the differences with France. That his only motive in entering upon this mission was the service of his country, and that the same motive will induce him to acquiesce cheerfully in any other arrangement that may be thought expedient. He has written in similar terms to the Secretary of State, and would write in like manner to you, but that he has not the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you. I have been much gratified by his confidence, and from this conduct and sentiments have formed an high opinion of his character and personal merit.

Mr. Monroe is at length gone from Bordeaux. Whether he is really charged with the pleasure of the Directory, you will soon know. It is now said that Paine is not gone with him, but is going out by himself. Mr. Monroe has, indeed, long been ashamed of his ally, even while he has been using his services. I remember that while he was feeding him at his table, and lodging him under his roof, his friends were circulating all over Europe that it was sorely against his will, that he wanted much to get rid of him, but could not, and that Mrs. M[onroe] especially could not endure such a filthy beast in the house. In the meantime, there he stayed; there he wrote his infamous, lying libel against Washington, which he took care to intersperse with a parasitical eulogy of his host; there he completed the expedient worthy of himself, whereby he hoped at once to vent all his abuse, and to give Monroe the credit of having suppressed it. There he wrote his second part of his *Age of Reason*, and used to entertain Monroe's visitors with his facetiousness at the expense of religion. Monroe had given him an

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apartment in a building separated from his principal house, and which was an upper story over his stables; and Paine used to tell a company that the Christian religion came into the world by a stable, and by a stable it should go out of it.

It is with extreme reluctance that I have given you, though in the most intimate confidence, my sentiments upon Mr. Monroe's conduct during his mission to France. A most unfortunate mission it has been for his country, and where its consequences will lead, I am more able to conjecture than willing to foretell. I hope he was not aware of them himself, because I had rather consider him as prejudiced and improvident, but honest, than something worse. . . .

I am &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

THE HAGUE, 20 May, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

Among the papers enclosed there is one (that of the 10th) containing a pretended extract of a letter from Philadelphia, giving an account of the manner in which the anniversary of the treaty with France was celebrated, and also of the opening and counting the votes for President and Vice President at the late election. You will see with what effrontery it lies in speaking of you, and with how much malignity it states first an equality of force between two factions in America, and next your attachment to one that is for an union with England. It is to be observed that this paper is published by persons who are said to be friendly towards America, and who have expressly disapproved the violent and insolent proceedings of their government towards us. I have already repeatedly suggested it to you, and I wish I could not have continual occasion to renew the observation,

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you have everything to expect from France but justice and good-will.[1]

The preliminaries of peace between France and the Emperor have not yet been published. Mr. Hammond, who was sent from England upon the business of negotiation, found the peace made on his arrival at Vienna.[2] It does not appear probable that any peace between France and England will be made. The French government are determined to try a descent. They are prompted at once by the hopes of plunder, of producing a Revolution, and of disburthening themselves of their own troops.

I expected my brother to return from Paris not later than this day week, and I shall immediately after complete my preparations for departure. Whether I shall go by the way of England, or direct from Amsterdam, is not yet determined.

When my brother went to Paris I gave him a letter for your old friend Arnoux,[3] who was very glad to see him and happy to hear from our family. Mr. Arnoux has answered my letter and desires particularly to be remembered to you; the old gentleman passed a year in prison, during the time which they call the reign of terror. . . .

Since I began this letter General Pinckney has called upon me, and I find by letters which he has received and by some English newspapers, that Congress were called together for the 15th of this month. I hope their measures will show a

[1] "There is in the *Nouvelles Politiques* of 21 Floréal an infamous aspersion upon your father, as false as if it had come in a straight line from Hell. I am surprised to see it in that paper, because it is generally moderate and impartial." *To Thomas B. Adams*, May 17, 1797. Ms.

[2] The preliminaries of peace were signed at Leoben, April 18, by which Austria relinquished all claims to the Belgic provinces, and recognized the limits of France as decreed by the laws of the French Republic. For this the Emperor was to receive an "equitable indemnity," to determine which the public Congress of Rastadt sat for sixteen months.

[3] Abbé Arnoux. See *Works of John Adams*, III. 135.

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spirit of union, and a temper at once of firmness and moderation. I am much afraid that at all events the French are determined to quarrel with *our government*, though at present they say they are not. Our treaty with Britain is a stalking-horse, the use of which they were taught from our own side of the water. But the *real prospects*, I believe, are two: the Western, or Southern Republic; and the change in our Constitution, which I wrote you was concerted, in my letter from London of December 24, 1795.

In order to effect their purpose they are committing every possible provocation that can rouse our resentment and indignation. They are hunting for pretexts of offence, and for want of others use such as are perfectly ridiculous. But they are ready to seize with avidity every mark of resentment which their insolence and injustice provoke, and represent as an offence from us. The art of picking a quarrel is one of those which they have so constantly been exercising both at home and abroad, that they have become very expert at it. It is thus that they fabricate almost all their conspiracies, and thus that they have ruined Geneva, as they soon will do all the Italian States. The dissolution of the Venetian government is already completed, and the Senate have finished by requesting General Buonaparte to give the Republic a new Constitution.[1] Buonaparte is the corruscation or the comet of the day. He is certainly not an ordinary man. It is not easy to see what the French Republic will do with him. I think they will not treat him quite so cavalierly as they have Pichegru.

I have no late letters from you. I expect none relating to public affairs. I am fully sensible how many spies there will be upon every word you write, and every word you say, as well as the base constructions and misrepresentations

[1] Venice adopted a new constitution, upon French models, in May.

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which will be studiously put upon them. I have seen a private letter of the late President, intercepted as is said, betrayed as I believe, and can easily guess how. Like everything else proceeding from that truly great man it carries not only its justification but its eulogy within itself. Yet an abominable use has been made of it. I have good reason to think also that his *private conversations* have been betrayed in the same manner, and for the same purposes. While I was in England I had an opportunity to reconnoiter the enemy's camp. I saw their perfidy and penetrated (*ho penetrado*) their designs. If I could without ridiculous presumption venture a word of advice to a President of the United States, it would be to fasten an eternal seal upon his lips, and burn his pen of private correspondence with regard to public affairs.

I am &c.

TO JOSEPH PITCAIRN

THE HAGUE, 23 May, 1797.

. . . . . .

I am happy to find that a translation of Mr. Pickering's letter to General Pinckney will be published, and that some paragraphs in the papers have at length taken our defence, against the scandalous misrepresentations, which have so long been making against us.

There was, however, in the *Nouvelles Politiques* of the 21st Floreal a very malignant and very false account of American affairs and parties. Nothing can be falser than an idea, that there is any *party* in America desirous for *an union with England*. There are not in my opinion five thousand human beings in the United States, but what would shed the last drop of their blood rather than consent to such an union. It is true that the late conduct of France will reconcile great numbers of our countrymen to a more friendly

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and cordial disposition towards the English. Our people hold by a commercial *interest* to peace with England, and by a political and moral *principle* to peace with all the world. But no man who knows anything of the American people can say, that any number of them large enough to form a faction or a party, wish for an union with England. Whoever asserts it must know that he lies to his own heart, as well as to the most unequivocal and unvaried testimony of things.

In the same paper of 28 Floreal there are some judicious and moderate observations, signed L. P. Ségur l'ainé,[1] in reply to others of a different description in the *Moniteur* and *Rédacteur*. I know not Mr. Ségur, but as an American feel obliged to him for making the voice of reason be heard in a manner certainly beneficial both to his country and ours.

But I observe with some concern, that the author even of these observations for want of accurate information does not state the conduct of the American government in so fair and advantageous a light as it really deserves. He does not, for instance, deny that Mr. Talon was ever admitted by the late President as the agent of the emigrant princes.[2] He might have denied it in the most positive manner, for such is the fact. There is no sort of evidence that these princes ever sent an agent to America. It is certain that none was received. He might have remarked that the Danish government did not receive a minister from the French Republic for years after its establishment. That the Count de Bernstorff formally disavowed in the face of all Europe having recognized M. Grouvelle,[3] who was then at Copen-

[1] Louis-Philippe Ségur (1753–1830).

[2] Antoine-Omer Talon (1760–1811). *Writings of George Washington* (Ford), XII. 285; XIII. 440.

[3] Philippe-Antoine Grouvelle (1757–1806). See Masson, *Le Département des Affaires Etrangères*, 215n.

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hagen with that capacity. That no Danish Minister was sent to Paris, avowed as such, until since the death of the Empress of Russia, and that the French government have never made this a subject of complaint against that of Denmark. The first minister of the French Republic to America was received without a moment of delay or hesitation.

Upon the subject of the treaty of 19 November, 1794,[1] Mr. Ségur does not sufficiently consider that it did not in one tittle vary from the ordinary law of nations in favor of Great Britain. That in the points, which the Directory have made subjects of complaint, it left everything exactly as it would have been without any treaty at all. That in providing for the payment of provisions captured under *the existing laws of nations*, it secured a stipulation advantageous not only to ourselves but to France, since it must operate as an encouragement to the exportation of those articles from America to France. That it expressly discards everything that could militate with the previous treaties of either party, and therefore reserves its full operation to that which we had made with France. That it shows by the clearest inference the disposition of the American government to establish universally the principle, that free ships shall make free goods, and that the *arrêté* of 12 Ventôse, by pretending to appropriate to France the 17, 18 and 21 articles of the treaty, could not give them an obnoxious operation, but by regulations in flagrant violation of the articles themselves.[2]

. . . . . .

I remain, etc.

[1] The Jay treaty.

[2] "France has asked of Holland to send away our Minister from them and to treat our commerce on the plan of their late decree. The Batavian government answered after due consideration that their commerce with us was now their chief commerce, that their money was in our funds, that if they broke off correspondence with us they should be without resources for themselves, for their own public

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COMMISSION TO PRUSSIA

JOHN ADAMS, President of the United States of America

To John Quincy Adams — Greeting

Reposing especial Trust and Confidence in your Integrity Prudence and Ability, I have nominated and by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, do appoint you the said John Quincy Adams Minister Plenipotentiary for the United States of America at the Court of His Majesty the King of Prussia, authorizing you hereby to do and perform all such Matters and things as to the said Place or Office doth appertain, or as may be duly given you in charge hereafter, and the said office to hold and exercise during the pleasure of the President of the United States for the time being. IN TESTIMONY whereof I have caused the seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed. Given under my hand at the City of Philadelphia, the First day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twenty-first.

JOHN ADAMS.

By the President of the United States,

(SEAL) TIMOTHY PICKERING,
Secretary of State.[1]

and for France, and therefore declined doing it. France acquiesced. I have this from the President, who had it from his son still at [the] Hague." *Jefferson to Madison*, May 28, 1797. *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford), VII. 126.

[1] The instructions were not prepared until July 15, 1797.

"When I nominated you to Berlin, your mother had not received the letter in which you mentioned your aversion to holding an office under my nomination. If I had known you had formed such a resolution, I should not have made any alteration in your destination, till I had written you on the subject.

"I think, however, that resolution was not well considered. It is the worst founded opinion I ever knew you conceive. 1. In the present case you have no greater emolument nor higher rank than you would have had, if you had gone to Lisbon under the nomination of President Washington. 2. You will not occasion one farthing more expense to your country. 3. You are not more dependent upon me now than you would have been, because I should have had the power to recall you at my pleasure from Lisbon, and I have no greater power to recall you from Berlin.

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POWER TO NEGOTIATE TREATIES WITH SWEDEN

JOHN ADAMS, President of the United States of America

To all whom these Presents shall concern — Greeting. KNOW YE, That reposing a special Trust and Confidence in the Integrity, Prudence and Abilities of John Quincy Adams, a Citizen of the United States of America, late their Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Portugal, I have given and granted and do hereby give and grant to the said John Quincy Adams full Power and Authority, and also a general and special Command, to meet and confer with the Ministers Commissioners or Deputies of his Majesty the King of Sweden, or any or more of them, being furnished with the like full powers, and with them or any one or more of them, to treat, consult and negotiate of and concerning the renewal of the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United

"Your reasons will not bear examination. Your own disqualifications, if they had existed, would have been the same at Lisbon as at Berlin. The superior title of many other American citizens, if that had existed, would have been the same in Portugal as in Prussia. But if there is any authority in the opinion of Washington and all his ministers, with which mine concurs, and it is supported by the opinions of all men I know or hear of, and by the general sense of America, your qualifications and title to the mission either to Portugal or Prussia, are equal to those of any one of your fellow citizens, be he who he may. Your disapprobation of a nomination by the President of his own son, is founded on a principle which will not bear the test. It is a false principle. It is an unjust principle. The sons of Presidents have the same claim to liberty, equality, and the benefit of the laws with all other citizens. It is downright injustice to them to prescribe a law of proscription against them. The law considers it as one of the severest punishments to declare a man incapable of serving in any office under the government. Shall an infamous disqualification to serve their country, the punishment of the highest crimes, be arbitrarily inflicted on the sons of a President, merely because they are his sons? Why has not the Constitution, or the Legislature, made such a law of exclusion? Upon my honor, if such a law had existed, I would not have accepted the office at my time of life, at least that is my present feeling and judgment.

"It gives no color of reason to those who represent you (if any such there are, which I do not believe, because it is well understood that Mr. Washington appointed you not only without my solicitation, but without my desire) as the creature of favor: because you stand exactly as you did, and there is no favor in it." *John Adams to John Quincy Adams*, November 3, 1797. Ms.

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States of America and His Majesty the King of Sweden,[1] with such alterations as shall be mutually agreed on; and to conclude and sign a treaty touching the premises; transmitting the same to the President of the United States of America for his final ratification by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate of the United States, if such advice and consent shall be given. IN TESTIMONY whereof I have caused the seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed. GIVEN under my hand at the City of Philadelphia, the First day of June, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the Twenty-first.

JOHN ADAMS.

By the President of the United States,

(SEAL) TIMOTHY PICKERING,
Secretary of State.

ADDRESS TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY[2]

A L'Assemblée Nationale Représentante le peuple Batave.
Citoyens Représentants:

Le Président des États Unis, ayant trouvé bon de me rappeller de la mission que j'ai l'honneur depuis plusiers années de remplir près de cette République, m'a donné l'ordre de prendre congé de l'Assemblée Nationale Batave, et de lui réitérer les assurances sincères de l'amitié du gouvernement des États Unis, et de son désir de perpétuer l'harmonie et la bonne intelligence, qui ont toujours si heureusement subsistés entre les deux Républiques.

Quelque pénible que soit pour moi, Citoyens Représentants, le moment qui doit terminer mon séjour chez une nation si vraiment respectable, si digne de l'estime et de l'admiration

[1] Concluded in 1783, to be in force for fifteen years from the exchange of the ratifications.

[2] Adams received his letters of recall April 9, but having then no opportunity to go to Lisbon delayed the presentation until June.

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de tout observateur, et mes relations avec un gouvernement dont les procédés ont toujours eu droite à toute ma reconnaissance, il m'est cependant bien doux d'être encore l'organe entre deux peuples libres, de leurs sentimens d'amitié, d'harmonie et de bonne intelligence, de vous exprimer la bienviellance cordiale que ma patrie porte à la vôtre, et de vous le témoigner au nom d'un Président des États Unis, dont le caractère, les talents, et les vertus ainsi que les services à la cause de la liberté, vous sont connus, et que depuis l'époque auquel il me charge des ordres que j'exécute en ce moment a terminer par une retraite volontaire une carrière politique dont la patrie s'honorera toujours.

Pour renouveller les assurances et les preuves d'amitié de la part des États Unis pour la République Batave, un des derniers actes de son administration fut de nommer, avec le concours du Sénat des États Unis, pour résider auprès de cette République avec le même caractère que j'ai eu l'honneur de porter, William Vans Murray, un de nos citoyens distingués, qui après avoir été pendant six ans un des Représentans du peuple Américain dans le Congrès des États Unis, et jouissant par conséquent depuis long tems de sa confiance, connait parfaitement ses dispositions amicales, et ses vœux sincères pour le bonheur et la prospérité du peuple Batave. Il se fera toujours un plaisir de vous les exprimer. Puissent-t-ils durer à jamais. Puisse l'union d'intérêts et de sentimens qui caractérise nos deux nations, cimentée par l'amour et la jouissance commune de la liberté être ardente et vive comme elle et comme la justice éternelle et inaltérable.

A la Haye, ce 20 Juin 1797.

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TO JOHN ADAMS

AMSTERDAM, 7 June, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

My brother has returned from Paris and is now at the Hague. I am here making the necessary arrangements for my departure. I propose to go by the way of London and to take a companion there. I am now only waiting to see Mr. Murray who has arrived at the Texel [1] but has not yet come up here.

Our old friend Arnoux was very civil to my brother and appeared extremely desirous that the difference between the United States and France should be amicably settled. He introduced him to the Director Carnot, with whom he dined the day before he left Paris. The first thing Carnot said to him was an invective against our treaty with England. Carnot most probably does not know what it contains. He has taken his ideas of it from Merlin de Douai and Charles Delacroix who took theirs from ——.[2] There is in the whole of this business a mystery of iniquity which I would hope some future day will unfold.

This character which the Legislative Councils have assumed since the entrance of the new third part, and the choice of Barthélemi as a member of the Directory,[3] fully convince me that much might be done at this time by way of conciliation. But it must be done by persons really desirous to produce it. The greatest enemies of America in France are Americans themselves. General Pinckney is as active as possible at this distance; whether his directions are observed I am unable to say. There is incapacity if not worse in the

[1] On June 7.

[2] A blank in the Ms.; probably Monroe is intended.

[3] May 27, to succeed Letourneur.

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only American official character that has access to the French government.[1]

. . . . . .

The Hague, June 19, 1797. While I was writing as above Mr. Murray arrived at Amsterdam, and from that day to the present I have been so much engaged that I hope it will serve as an excuse for not having finished this letter.[2] As I have determined to go by the way of England, you will perhaps be the more readily disposed to accept my apology.

Mr. Murray delivered me your kind letter of 21 March. It gives me great pleasure to have a person for whom I have so great a regard and esteem to succeed me here. He will find the dispositions of the persons in government as friendly and well disposed towards America as they dare to be; and they will continue so long as they shall not find an absolute necessity to manifest the contrary. This they will never do without extreme reluctance; but the example which they have given with regard to Portugal proves that what is positively required they cannot refuse.

The approbation with which my mission here has been hon-

[1] Skipwith, whose bias is shown in his letter to Jefferson, March 17, 1798, printed in Gibbs, *Administrations of Washington and Adams*, II. 158.

[2] "Fortunately Mr. Adams was not gone, and I had the pleasure of meeting him at Amsterdam. This was lucky for me, both because to meet so amiable and intelligent a man at all is desirable, and that the conversations I have had with him are to prove the only chance and resource of knowledge upon any of the foreign affairs connected with the United States that I am to enjoy and draw from, independent of my own apprenticeship and experience. For the United States have never had a single book, paper, register, or archive kept at this court that I can hear of, and each successor is to take up business which may have been left unfinished — unless he has a copy of a memorial or two, either at the right or wrong end, or according to the light which doubtful intelligence on the spot may enable him." *William Vans Murray to James McHenry*, June 22, 1797. Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry*, 227. On June 16 Murray was presented to Mr. Van Leyden, secretary to the Committee for Foreign Affairs, and on the 20th he met the President of the National Assembly. Adams left the Hague June 28.

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ored very far exceeds not only my deserts, but even my wishes. Sincere and honest good intentions are indeed of themselves so valuable, that I can easily conceive how they have been overrated upon this occasion. You require from me as good intelligence from Lisbon as I have given from this place. I hope not to remit of my industry; but I have had several important advantages here, which have arisen from accident or good fortune, which I cannot promise myself there. My chain of correspondence too in Europe must be broken up, and in that remote situation will not easily be repaired. Books, pamphlets, newspapers, reviews, every one of these articles so necessary to form an accurate opinion of current events, are not so easily accessible there as in this country; and besides all I would if possible lead you to expect less than I fear you will, because that is more than I fear I shall ever be able to perform.

With regard to my return to America it is true that I constantly feel such an inclination strongly bearing upon me. "I feel the bond of nature draw me to my own." I cherish and encourage this sentiment because I fear the operation of habit and new acquaintances and connections, to bind me by the attachments other than those of my country. Yet I shall reconcile myself to continue my residence in Europe as long as circumstances will permit, or as will be in any manner proper; remembering that even were it possible for me to recede from a rigorous principle of exclusion for me (which I never can believe), it is at least my duty never to accept any public office whatever under your nomination. From that duty I shall not swerve. But I should not have renewed a subject upon which I have heretofore expressed my sentiments, but for an intimation that the late President has expressed a wish that you would not withhold promotion from me if I should deserve it. His approbation and good

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opinion are indeed more precious to me than any promotion whatever. The distinction by which he thinks my promotion by you reconcileable with his own practise while he held the office, may as it respects any other person be just. I cannot admit it for myself.

Tomorrow I am to deliver my letters of recall and Mr. Murray his credentials to the President of the Batavian National Assembly. Of this circumstance I shall give an account to the Secretary of State.[1]

I am &c.

[1] "It is an usual practice with this government, as with most others in Europe, upon the departure of a foreign minister, to make him a present of a gold chain and medal. As I had reason to expect that such a present would be offered to me, and as I did not consider myself at liberty conformably to the Constitution of the United States to accept it, I mentioned the circumstance to Mr. van Leyden. He said that a similar rule existed in this country but that permission was always given upon application to the government to receive these presents; he proposed to me therefore to request the permission of Congress in this instance, and observed that the affair might remain in such a state, that if the permission be obtained, the medal may afterwards be sent to me. As he intimated to me that a positive refusal might be thought to wear an unpleasant appearance, and as I have since been again urged by the Committee upon the subject, I have agreed to write you a statement of the matter, but shall mention it as doubtful, whether the permission of Congress will be given. In truth as it respects myself, I do not wish to ask it. The mere sollicitation of liberty to receive a present from a foreign power, seems an approximation to what the Constitution has by a rule forbidden, and I shall not certainly set the example." *To the Secretary of State*, June 20, 1797. Ms. The subject is controlled by § 9, Art. 1 of the Constitution of the United States. The first European state to oppose the practice of making presents to ambassadors was the Netherlands, which adopted in 1651 a regulation prohibiting its ministers in foreign parts "to take any presents, directly or indirectly, in any manner or way whatever." Moore, *Digest of International Law*, IV. 576 *et seq.*

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TO JOHN ADAMS

MAASSLUYS, 2 July, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I wrote you two or three days ago from Rotterdam, which I left the next day[1] and am still detained here by contrary winds. I then mentioned that Pastoret[2] has made a motion in the French Council of Five Hundred tending to annul the *arrêtés* of the Directory relative to America, particularly that of 12 Ventôse, which he truly represented as contrary to the Constitution. It was referred to a Committee of five to report upon it. You will have a more circumstantial account of the whole matter from another quarter; but there are some observations which will not occur elsewhere, and which may perhaps in some degree contribute to give you a just idea of the state of our affairs in France.

Infinite pains have been taken there to spread universally the idea that there are in America only two parties, the one entirely devoted to France and the other to England. You have been in the Paris newspapers expressly represented as at the head of the latter, and Mr. Jefferson of the former. The English too have been much disposed to countenance the same idea. The artifice of the French party in America, to throw the odium of partiality to the English upon every man who would not sacrifice his country to France, has been very industriously pursued, and in a very considerable degree successful. It is one instance of their denomination giving system which Fauchet so much extols. In France everything has contributed to give prevalence to this falsehood. Pastoret therefore himself in making his motion said that the American government had indeed given some reason to doubt of the loyalty of its intentions, by their treaty with *Great Britain*, but that this was not sufficient for a rupture, etc.

[1] June 30. [2] Claude-Emmanuel-Joseph-Pierre Pastoret (1755–1840).

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This universal dislike of that treaty by all the parties in France, while none of them can give one substantial reason for their dislike, is for us its highest panegyric. It shows that it interferes with views which they dare not avow. The objections that they have ever made against it are perfectly futile. The *arrêté* of 12 Ventôse bears internal evidence that the reasons assigned are not the real ones. I drew up at General Pinckney's request about two months ago some observations concerning that *arrêté*. I particularly dwelt upon the point of the British Treaty, and showed that the Directory, by resting the rules of their *arrêté* upon certain articles of the treaty, merely sought a pretext: that it was totally destitute of foundation, since every one of the rules was not only variant from, but in direct violation of the articles cited for its justification. In order to show this in its clearest and most striking light, I placed in opposite columns the several rules and articles, so that their incompatibility might appear at a single glance, adding at the close of each some observations of my own. This paper was seen by Pastoret before he made his motion, and he concurred in the opinion that the *arrêté* was unconstitutional. But as to the opposite columns, General Pinckney's correspondent at Paris only wrote to him, that in these discussions all *long quotations* should be avoided, *because they would not read them.* Whether Pastoret read them or not, I shall not say; but what sort of discussion can be carried on with persons who will not read the very state of the question in debate? Whether that part of my paper was read, or was offered for reading or not, Pastoret did not the less complain of the British Treaty, and complain of it as an act of the American government unfriendly to France.

Pastoret is one of the most distinguished members of the Council of Five Hundred. He came in at the first Constitu-

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tional election in October, 1795, and was not a member of the Convention. He has all along supported with eloquence and firmness the cause of moderation and justice against the revolutionary violence and wickedness which has so often prevailed even since the establishment of the Constitution. Dumolard [1] is another member of the same description, and these two are certainly the most conspicuous characters that have arisen in that third part of the legislature. Barbé-Marbois [2] our old acquaintance came in at the same time, and appears to have the same system in the Council of Elders. This party, since the introduction of the new third part, have an unquestionable and strong majority in both Councils; but the old remaining third of the Convention, with their four-fifths of the Directory, are reviving the Jacobin clubs, preparing for insurrections, and endeavoring to secure the armies on their side.

Since the motion of Pastoret, Dumolard has brought forward one of a like nature against the measures conducted or permitted by the Directory in Italy. It occasioned some debate, and finally was adjourned *until the report of the Committee upon the motion of Pastoret* should be made. This circumstance deserves notice, for the adjournment was upon an observation of Thibaudeau, "that it was improper, and might be dangerous to investigate these transactions in Italy, *since they might be deeply connected with the negotiations for a general Peace.*" So you see, Genoa, Venice, and perhaps Switzerland, are to be not only revolutionized but plundered, dismembered, divided, torn to pieces, in every way, to make an arrangement for a general peace. And as the subject is adjourned until the report upon the differences with America shall be made, it looks very much as if some arrangement

[1] Jacques-Vincent Dumolard (1766–1819).

[2] François Barbé de Marbois (1745–1837).

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relative to us too was in contemplation, as connected with the negotiations for a general peace.[1]

There is an observation of Montesquieu, that it is sometimes bad policy in a small state to remain neutral in the wars between two great powers, its neighbors, because neither of them being bound to it by the force of obligation or interest, they may finally settle their difference by sacrificing the small power between them. The truth of this remark is strongly exemplified by the present fate of the Italian Republics, though it is far from being clear that they could have escaped it by taking part in the war. However that may be, it is important for us to take care not to be made ourselves the victims of any such agreement. If France has any such designs, it must be in the plan of severing the United States into two Republics, one of which she would take under her protection and mould to her will, leaving the other to the influence and management of Britain. I am far from being certain that the British government would be averse to such a division.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

MY DEAR MOTHER: MAASSLUYS, 6 July, 1797.

. . . . . .

Our situation with that country is equivocal and dangerous. General Pinckney acts great prudence and wisdom, and I am persuaded will do everything possible in the disadvantageous situation in which he still remains. But there are very many wicked agents, and many very bad passions at work against the interest and the friendship of the two nations.

[1] See *Murray to McHenry*, September 22, 1797, in Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry*, 276.

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With regard to the West India depredations, the Directory have published a letter from Sonthonax and his brother robbers,[1] their agents, in which they freely declare, that they had employed cruisers against American vessels without authority, but because they wanted provisions, because the Americans were ill-disposed, and because after the election of John Adams as President of the United States they concluded there would be a war between the two countries. The Directory have recalled those Commissioners, and their infamous piracies have not been unnoticed even in Paris. An investigation and scrutiny have already been called for into the other hostile measures of the Directory; there is no doubt a strong party in France who disapprove of them, but they are afraid of nothing so much as of being too much in the right.

Among those who call and think themselves our friends, and who are indeed sensible how unjustly the Directory has treated us, is Barbé-Marbois, a man well-known in America, and now a very distinguished member of the Council of Ancients. He has lately made a report relative to the expenses in the department of foreign affairs. It appears they are four or five times as great as they were in the most extravagant periods of the old government. And for all this augmentation of charges, they have, according to Marbois, got but a very contemptible set of negotiators abroad, among whom he has with equal justice and severity included their late minister to the United States.

One of them, (says Marbois,) sent to a friendly nation, will imagine he serves his country by sowing distrust and suspicion between the government and the people. In order to acquire the reputation of being active and influential, he will expose two na-

[1] Leblanc, Léger-Félicite Sonthonnax (1763–1813), and Raimond, commissioners sent to the Windward Islands.

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tions, united by their reciprocal interests, by benefits, and by gratitude, to a fatal rupture; he will exert himself to sully the splendor of the fairest life, the eminent qualities of the greatest man, that our country can offer to history, and present to posterity; and even though he should not attain the end proposed, the mind of men will nevertheless be alienated, and a double portion of wisdom will be necessary to bring them together again.

So you see that even in the capital of France, even in the sanctuary of their legislation, a public and an eloquent voice is yet found, ready to pay the tribute of justice to the character of Washington, and to reward with richly deserved contempt the reptile that would have shed its filth and venom upon such brightness. . . .

I remain &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

MAASSLUYS, 7 July, 1797.

. . . . . .

I find by the French papers, which you were so kind as to leave with me, that the report of Barbé-Marbois to the Council of Elders, relative to the expenses in the French department of foreign affairs, has been printed in a pamphlet at full length. It would perhaps be worth while to send for one or two copies of it, and forward them to the Secretary of State. I wish to see a translation of it appear in our public prints. The eulogium upon Washington, so just and so well expressed, will do honor to the speaker, and will have a conciliatory effect upon the minds of our countrymen towards France. It contains, besides, many curious details proper for our information. There is yet in our country a great deal of enthusiasm in favor of the French, founded upon an idea of their regeneration and republicanism. Every authentic document, which tends to show that such opinions

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are founded upon delusion, and are spread abroad by imposture, becomes precious, and should not I think be withheld from our people. Whatever tends at once to reconcile the two *nations*, and to prove the true character of the present French administration, will answer two excellent purposes at the same time. These ideas, however, I am well persuaded, have occurred to General Pinckney, and it is very probable that he may have received already the pamphlet from Paris. If you concur with me in opinion as to Marbois's report, it may be worth suggesting to him.

There is another thing *in this country*, which I forgot mentioning to you when you were here, which I find in the Dutch newspapers, and of which you have heard perhaps much at the Hague. The provincial assembly of Holland have opened what they call a voluntary loan of 12 million of guilders, but I imagine the loan will in the end turn out to be *a tax*. The unexpected taxation to which this country has submitted since its alliance with the terrible Republic, is one of the objects upon which our government at least, should be possessed of information upon indisputable authority. The features of such fraternity are sufficiently ghastly, and well deserve to be exposed.

I shall once more solicit the last Paris and Leyden papers; they will in all probability reach me by the post.[1]

With my respects &c.

[1] "July 12. By the regulations prescribed here in consequence of the war, no passenger is allowed to go up beyond Gravesend in the vessel himself, or to take out any of his baggage, all of which must go to London. We landed in the morning, and were employed most of the forenoon in obtaining the expedition of our passports. They are all examined here by a Mr. Mazzinghi, and sent to the Duke of Portland's (Secretary of State) office, whence they must be returned with permission for the holder to go up to London. In the meantime the passengers are detained, with a guard placed over them. Mr. Mazzinghi, however, dispensed with this circumstance in our behalf, in consideration of my public character; and with that of Mr. Aguiar, as he was charged with dispatches from the Portuguese minister

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INSTRUCTIONS

To John Quincy Adams, Esquire

Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America to His Majesty the King of Prussia

Sir:

By inspecting the Treaty of Amity and Commerce concluded in the year 1785, between the United States and the late Frederick the second, King of Prussia, you will observe that it was to be in force during the term of ten years from the exchange of the ratifications. This exchange took place about the month of September, in the year 1786, and of course the treaty has expired.

You will receive herewith a commission containing full powers to renew this treaty, in its present form, for another term of ten years; but with the following exceptions, if the same shall be assented to on the part of the King.

1. It will be expedient to omit that part of the sixteenth article which exempts the vessels of each party from embargo, and to render them liable to a *general embargo*. There is a like clause of exemption in our treaty with Sweden, which occasioned disagreeable comparisons and real inconveniences, when by a general embargo in 1794, the vessels of all other nations and of our own citizens were detained in port.

2. The twenty-third article of our treaty with Prussia forbids the commissioning of privateers to take or destroy the trading vessels, or to interrupt the commerce of the contracting parties in case a war should arise between them. And considering the abuses too often committed by privateers and the spirit in which privateering is commenced and prosecuted, it has sometimes appeared desirable to abolish the practice altogether. But the policy of this principle, as it respects the United States, may well be doubted. We are weak at present in public vessels of war, and our actual revenues are not adequate to the equipping of powerful

in Holland to his government. We all left Gravesend therefore with a coach and four, between twelve and one o'clock, and arrived in London at Osborne's Hotel in the Adelphi at about five in the afternoon." Ms. *Diary*.

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fleets: but we are strong in the number of our seamen, in private wealth, and in the uncommon enterprise of our citizens. Our chief means therefore, of annoying and distressing a maritime enemy would be our privateers. For these reasons you will propose and endeavor to effect an alteration in this 23rd article, and to leave commerce, in case of a war between us and Prussia, to the attacks of privateers.

The principle that free ships make free goods is also found in the treaty with Prussia (Article 12.) It is a principle that the United States have adopted in all their treaties (except that with Great Britain), and which they sincerely desire might become universal: but treaties formed for this object they find to be of little or no avail, because the principle is not universally admitted among the maritime nations. It has not been regarded in respect to the United States when it would operate to their benefit; and may be insisted on only when it will prove injurious to their interests. You will therefore propose to abandon it, in the new treaty which you are empowered to renew and negotiate with Prussia.[1]

On the like ground you are to propose to admit of articles contraband of war, and among them to enumerate timber for ship-

[1] "In the instructions dated the 15th instant, relative to your renewing our treaties with Prussia and Sweden, you see expressed the earnest wishes of the United States that the principle that *free ships should make free goods*, should become universal. This principle is peculiarly interesting to us, because our naval concerns are mercantile and not warlike. And you will readily perceive that the abandonment of that principle was suggested by the measures of the belligerent powers during the present war, in which we have found that neither its obligation by the pretended modern law of nations, nor the solemn stipulations of treaties, secured its observation. On the contrary it has been made the sport of events. Under such circumstances it appeared to the President desirable to avoid renewing an obligation which would probably be enforced when our interest should require its dissolution, and be continued when we could derive some advantage from its observance.

"But it is possible that in the pending negotiations for peace this principle of *free ships making free goods* may be adopted by all the great maritime powers; in which case the United States will be among the first of the other powers to accede to it, and to observe it as an universal rule." *From the Secretary of State*, July 17, 1797. Ms.

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building, tar, pitch, turpentine and rosin, copper in sheets, sails, hemp and cordage, and generally whatever may serve directly to the equipment of vessels, unwrought iron and fir planks only excepted.

But although these alterations appear desirable, yet if the state of things shall in your judgment render it expedient not to propose them; or if proposed not to insist on them; you will act accordingly. In another period of ten years, it will probably not occasion any material embarrassment between the United States and Prussia, to renew the treaty precisely in its present form. And at this time it is peculiarly interesting to us to conciliate the goodwill of that and other European nations.

Another and the principal design of the President in this appointment was to place at Berlin a Minister of your abilities and knowledge in diplomatic affairs, from whom in the existing situation of Europe correct intelligence and information highly interesting to the United States might be derived; and who by his vigilance and sagacity might find and embrace opportunities to promote their security and welfare.

A third object will be to renew the Treaty of Amity and Commerce between the United States and Sweden; for which also full powers are herewith transmitted. By the Swedish Minister at Berlin or otherwise, you will make known to the Court of Sweden that you are invested with such powers.

The ratifications of the Swedish treaty it is supposed were exchanged in the beginning of the year 1784, as on the 9th of March of that year Dr. Franklin wrote from Paris to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, that he had made the exchange.[1] In like manner Mr. Adams wrote from London on the 27th of October, 1786, that he had been in Holland and exchanged the ratifications of the Prussian treaty.[2] No documents are found to show the day when the exchange took place.

For the reasons above assigned in respect to the Prussian treaty,

[1] It was a letter addressed to Charles Thomson, and is printed in *Writings of Franklin* (Smyth), IX. 176.

[2] *Works of John Adams*, VIII. 415.

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that with Sweden should be altered in the 17th article so as to subject the vessels of Sweden as well as those of other nations to the effects of a general embargo — enemies property found on board them to capture and confiscation as good prize — and ship timber and naval stores (as before enumerated) to be deemed contraband of war. The right of privateering is to remain as already fixed in the treaty with Sweden.

I have the honor to be with great respect, Sir, your obt. servant,

TIMOTHY PICKERING,
Secretary of State.[1]

DEPARTMENT OF STATE,
PHILADELPHIA, July 15, 1797.

[1] "The President has nominated his son, John Quincy Adams, as minister in Prussia. The subject is not yet acted upon in the Senate; there will be opposition to it. My own conjecture is that it will pass. The king of Prussia, although a great villain, has obtained already, and may probably obtain, a preponderancy in the north of Europe. Whether he may not get at the sea, and become a maritime prince; or, rather, the nation become a maritime people, is problematical, it is true, but rather probable than otherwise. Our treaty with that nation has expired; and he has, it is said, wondered why we did not offer a renewal of it; but the most important consideration is, that the intrigues and intentions of the French can now better be learnt there than at the Hague, or any other court. In our present situation with France, it has become an object of consequence to keep a steady eye on that intriguing, insidious, and convulsed government and people. It is believed that John Q. Adams, placed at Berlin, can do us much service, as he is unquestionably the most intelligent, and at the same time most industrious man, we have ever employed in a diplomatic capacity." *Uriah Tracy to Oliver Wolcott, Sr.*, May 27, 1797. Gibbs, *Administrations of Washington and Adams*, I. 538. "Yesterday they put up the nomination of J. Q. Adams to Berlin, which had been objected to as extending our diplomatic establishment. It was approved by 18 to 14." *Jefferson to Madison*, June 1, 1797. *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford), VII. 132. "The Senate concurred in the appointment, 19 to 9. Those who were opposed said it was not the person, but the mission; it was contended that the constitution gave them no right to judge of that, that the power lay wholly with the Executive. The Jacobins endeavored to make use of it, as though it was an advancement from the Residentship at the Hague, to a Plenipotentiaryship, and being the first nomination, was held up by communications in Bache's papers as a proof of the aspiring views of the President. But this could only impose on a few." *Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams*, June 15, 1797. Ms.

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

LONDON, 29 July, 1797.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

. . . . . .

You observe that the reason for changing my mission from Lisbon to Berlin was that I might be more useful to my country in the latter situation.[1] I have, notwithstanding my formal declaration both to you and to my father made a short time ago, submitted to take this appointment. I have broken a resolution that I had deliberately formed, and that I still think was right and proper; but I must say that I never acted more reluctantly, and that the tenure by which I am hereafter to hold an office is of such a nature as will take from me all the satisfaction, which I have enjoyed hitherto in considering myself as a public servant. It has indeed totally disconcerted all my arrangements taken in consequence of my previous appointment to Lisbon, and will be very inconvenient to me personally; but these are not

[1] July 26, 1797. "At nine this morning I went accompanied by my brother, to Mr. Johnson's, and thence to the Church of the parish of All Hallows Barking, where I was married to Louisa Catherine Johnson, the second daughter of Joshua and Catherine Johnson, by Mr. [John] Hewlett. Mr. Johnson's family, Mr. [James] Brooks, my brother, and Mr. J[oseph] Hall were present." Adams, *Memoirs*. "Young JOHN ADAMS' Negotiations, have terminated in a Marriage Treaty with an English lady, the daughter of one Mr. Johnson, on Tower-Hill. It is a happy circumstance that he has made no other Treaty." *Independent Chronicle*, September 14, 1797. The *Columbian Centinel*, September 20, replied: "This is an imposition on the public, who ought to be informed, without derogating from the merits of the ladies of England, that Mrs. A. is an American lady; that her father is a citizen of Maryland, and brother to His Excellency THOMAS JOHNSON, Esq. Late Governor of that state. All who know Mrs. A. speak of her as a lady of distinguished worth, and if every negotiation Mr. A. makes in Europe, terminates as happily for his country, as this will for him, we shall have additional cause to praise the wisdom of that illustrious character, who selected him from his fellow-citizens as one of the representatives of the United States, in the Eastern hemisphere."

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circumstances of the slightest objection. On the contrary they have been among the most powerful motives to induce the sacrifice of my resolution, and the determination to go upon the new mission. I am now waiting here only for the necessary papers, which I shall expect from day to day. I beg at the same time to be understood that it is not the animadversions of my old schoolmate Bache, nor those of any of his party, that I dread, or that can raise the shadow of a scruple in my mind. I know them and their purposes tolerably well, and they may rest perfectly assured, that if instead of concluding to go to Berlin I had on this occasion requested to be recalled, and had returned to America, as I had serious thoughts of doing, it would not have been for their benefit or advantage, nor would they have had any reason to be gratified by it. They should find me at least as hard an antagonist at home as I have been abroad, and as I perceive I have had the advantage of giving them some dissatisfaction that they have expressed and a great deal more that they have betrayed, I promise them faithfully that upon my return to America, whenever it may be, I will not suffer their malevolence to cool at all; but will feed and nourish it by much more frequent and copious doses of mortification than I have been able at this distance to administer.

The letter to the Florentine,[1] which you mention, and

[1] Jefferson's letter to Mazzei, April 24, 1796. See *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford), VII. 72. "I see that *the letter* to that precious Professor, call him Matzei, is considered by [Noah] Webster as genuine, and he says he has *authority* so to consider it! But you have *faith;* I am inclined to *superstition*, but not to faith, and almost believe in the personal agency of the Devil. *His* influence, not the last gentleman's but *yours*, does I am convinced immense mischief in the Senate, I know several genteel men, with about as much of *science* as I have, that is just enough to make them wonder that any mortal should have more, who I am sure are the dupes of his philosophising dinners, in which the almost reasonable theories of universal benevolence and philanthropy blend themselves easily with the politics of the day,

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which was undoubtedly published by way of justification for the violence with which the Directory have conducted towards us, was something more than impudent. It shows a mind full of error or an heart full of falsehood. I cannot yet believe this last to be the case. My old sentiments of respect veneration and attachment still hang about me with regard to that man. Yet if he really believed what the letter to M[azzei] affirms, he must be a *very* weak man. If he did not believe it, what can be said of his principles. Neither can I reconcile the letter with the public and solemn professions made on a recent occasion, and indeed nearly at the same moment while the letter was published in France. However, it may be, there could not be a stronger proof of the misrepresentations and calumnies which have contributed to produce the late and present conduct of France towards us. Nor could any possible evidence appear more unequivocally to show, how much the French depend upon an internal party in America to support and justify their treatment of us.

I was, for my own part, much pleased with the appointment of Mr. Gerry, after finding that Mr. Dana did not accept. But I find opinions of him here, similar to those which you mention as having been objected against him by the opposing members of the Senate. I sincerely hope, however, that he will raise no captious difficulties, and that he will both bring with him and meet a cordial disposition

and are promoted by the satisfactions of the table. These are then connected, as they are unfolded over a generous glass, with the grand and enlightened views of France, with touches upon the brilliance of her *victories*, and her gorgeous strength; and the country gentleman who went well enough inclined to give a vote for plain measures of defense and preparation, gets his head turned, and comes away a philosopher, and would not for worlds interrupt such grand designs, or longer feel sentiments that evince low prejudice and narrow views." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, August 23, 1797. Ms.

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for reconciliation. Of this however I cannot at present well judge. . . .[1]

The history of the portrait, which you received last March, was this.[2] While I was here the last time, Mr. Copley told me that Mrs. Copley had long been wishing to send you some token of her remembrance and regard, and thinking that a likeness of your son would answer the purpose, requested me to sit to him, which I did accordingly, and he produced a very excellent picture as you see. I had it framed in a manner which might correspond to the merit of the painting, and after I left this country it was sent out by Mr. Copley in the manner in which you received it. I never mentioned it to you in any of my former letters, because I knew not exactly when it would be sent out, and I wished to reserve to you what I thought would be the pleasure of an agreeable surprise. It seems that Mr. Copley's letter to you by its enigmatical style was written in the same spirit, and the portrait served really as its own introduction. It is, therefore, to the delicate politeness of Mr. and Mrs.

[1] On the day after his inauguration, President Adams received a visit from Fisher Ames, then about to retire from the Senate. Mr. Ames advised a new commission to France, and recommended George Cabot for the appointment. The President wished to send Jefferson, but recognized the doubts which could be urged against such a nomination, and he made an offer to Madison, who declined. On consulting Wolcott, he found him opposed to Madison and to any commission; but Hamilton wrote (March 30) Wolcott approvingly, and named Madison, Pinckney and Cabot as members. Wolcott reluctantly accepted the idea of a commission, but asked "what will be the objection against sending Mr. Ingersoll of this city, or some such character, to be united with Gen. Pinckney and John Q. Adams, or with Mr. Murray, to rendezvous at Amsterdam to await developments?" To the President, Wolcott wrote about joining two of the ministers then in Europe to Pinckney, and believed Rufus King and John Q. Adams the most proper characters. The President sent to the Senate the names of Pinckney, John Marshall and Francis Dana. Dana declined and Elbridge Gerry was nominated to be the third member of the commission. He was supported by the republican vote.

[2] This portrait is reproduced as the frontispiece to Vol. I.

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Copley that we are indebted for a present so flattering to me, and in your maternal kindness so acceptable to you. They are well with all their family, and continue to remember you with affection.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO CHARLES ADAMS

LONDON, 1 August, 1797.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

. . . . . .

The Jacobins, you tell me, are not pleased with my official communications that have been published,[1] and Mr. Livingston[2] can compare them to nothing but the speech of the Director Barras to Mr. Monroe.

My old schoolfellow Bache has become too thoroughbred a democrat to suffer any regard for ancient friendship, or any sense of generosity for an *absent* enemy to suspend his patriotic scurrility. These people have improved upon the doctrine of Mandeville. He only contended that private vices were public benefits; but their theories, and still more their practice, makes public *virtue* essentially *consist* of the most detestable private vices. As for Mr. Livingston's

[1] On May 19, the Secretary of State, by direction of the President, sent to Congress papers relating to the refusal by France to receive Pinckney. Among them were extracts of two letter from Adams to the Secretary of State, dated September 27, 1796, and February 17, 1797. The papers communicated are printed in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 1. "The publication of Mr. Adams' letter respecting this country does us mischief. It has excited considerable heat, and is thought an insult. They would certainly have demanded his recall had he been here. . . . I have not been spoken to nor written to formally, and have, when I saw it would be convenient, attempted to soften the affair. The violence is pretty much against Mr. Adams, who is out of the reach of their anger." *Murray to McHenry*, September 22, 1797, in Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry*, 283, 286.

[2] Edward Livingston.

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comparison, from whom it would have given me severe mortification to have heard it made; but those men would not have made it, however they might have disapproved the tenor of my communications. Had they meant a violent attack upon a man, who never gave them, nor intended them, any provocation, they would have waited until he could be present to defend himself. Sentiments of this description, however, Mr. Livingston does not admit, perhaps does not understand, and, therefore, he cannot mortify me by comparing my letters to any speeches whatsoever, unless it be to his own. I never intended, nor expected, that those letters of mine would have been published. It is not my wish unnecessarily to give offence to anyone, much less to offer an insult to persons for whom I have a real regard; but it was my duty to give the true state of facts to my government, as well as to reply firmly to the inadmissible proposals of the Dutch Committee. Had I imagined the documents would have been brought before the public eye, perhaps I should have altered in some few passages the phraseology; but the substantial truth of facts, and the reasoning upon them would have been exactly the same, in defiance of all the teeth of Livingston and all the slaver of Bache.[1]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

[1] In a speech in Committee of the Whole, on the reported answer to the President's Speech, May 24, 1797, Livingston read extracts of Adams' dispatch of November 4, 1796, and added: "When a Minister of ours writes, and our Executive publishes such a letter, and such insinuations as these, it would seem a most extraordinary example of inconsistency in us to take offence at the opinions of an agent of the Republic for a similar licentiousness; can we wonder when our Minister speaks thus contemptuously of a nation, that others should make use of a similar freedom with us?" *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress, I. 133.

"I have seen an American gentleman lately returned from Paris; he says the new minister for foreign affairs [Talleyrand] is well disposed towards us, and I believe he

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TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, 31 August 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

A vessel, arrived a few days ago from Philadelphia, brought letters and papers to the 13th of the last month, and in them the letter of Mr. Blount,[1] the proceedings of both Houses of Congress upon it, the arrestation of Dr. Romayne,[2] the notes to the Secretary of State from the British Minister, and the letter from the Spanish Minister Yrujo,[3] which it is easier to qualify in my own mind than to designate in terms correspondent to its merits. It is painful to every true American to see one foreign minister after another using such language as those of powers, professing friendship towards us, have employed since the time of Genet. To degrade our government in the eyes of the world by showing that it may be insulted and reviled with impunity, is a part of that system which our foreign and domestic Jacobins pursue with concerted exertions for the dissolution of our Union and the overthrow of our Constitution. The figure of a Spanish Minister acting as an instrument to promote such views, however incongruous, cannot be surprising. It does us no honor in the eyes of the world where they see such conduct

is. No report was made upon Pastoret's motion, an unpleasant circumstance. They say it was thought best by *our friends there* to wait for the report until the arrival of the commissioners. In the mean time, the captures and condemnations continue as frequent and unprincipled as ever." *To William Vans Murray*, August 13, 1797.

[1] To James Carey, April 21, 1797. *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations II. 76; McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II. 339; Turner, in *American Historical Review*, X. 574.

[2] Dr. Nicholas Romayne appears to have been engaged in some land speculations. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 236.

[3] Yrujo's letter, dated July 11, 1797, was issued in a pamphlet, *Letter to T. Pickering*, 1797. Pickering's reply, dated August 8, was also issued in a pamphlet. *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 87, 89.

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pass without marks of resentment: but the national character suffers still more from instances of such transactions as are unfolded in Blount's letter. A Senator of the United States! and write such a paper! and act such a part! We have enemies and enviers enough in every part of Europe to seize hold of such circumstances, and blazon them forth as proofs of our depravity and corruption. I *wish* that some more pleasing intelligence may soon succeed, though my expectations are far from sanguine. Such as this is, I am obliged to gather it from the letters and papers which I can borrow, my own letters from America being scanty and deficient as usual.

I am still *anxiously* waiting here for my commission and instructions. Mr. King at my desire spoke to the Prussian Chargé des Affaires here upon the probability of a mission from the United States for the renewal of the Treaty, and expressed a wish to know in what manner it would be viewed by his government. The answer from the Prussian department of foreign affairs is: "Quant à M. King, vous lui repondrez en mon nom que je renouvellerai avec plaisir avec les Etats Unis de l'Amérique le traité de commerce conclu entre nous, et que la mission de M. Adams, que le President du Congrès se propose d'envoyer pour cet effet à Berlin, ne pourra que m'être très agréable."

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, 11 September, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

I intended to have given you some further account of the events that are occurring in France, but for want of authentic information shall wait a few days longer. The two parties

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which have been approaching each other in hostile array for several months past have at length come to action according to the usual revolutionary custom, and the victory remains as was to be expected on the side which had secured the argument of the bayonet in its favor. French republicanism will not belie itself. The circumstances of the present period betoken an approach toward a simple, unqualified *military government*, which seems to be the only possible issue to this portentous Revolution, but which few persons perhaps none would have expected to advance with such rapid strides. I shall give you the result of my observations upon the recent struggle of factions, as soon as the course of its catastrophe shall be clearly marked; but at present I can only leave you to such information as may be gathered from the newspapers. I send you, however, herewith two pamphlets lately published by Barère, a man who has been at one time very conspicuous upon the great theatre of French affairs, and whose talents the party now predominant have engaged on their side, as you will perceive by the contents of these works themselves.

It has been the policy of the French Directory to secure by all the means in their power the assistance of literary men; a policy natural and obvious enough, but which from the position in which they stood they could not carry into effect to any great degree. The authors who would consent to become the apologists or panegyrists of such men and such measures could not be very scrupulous or conscientious. They took up therefore with what they could get.

I have heretofore sent you one or two pamphlets of Theremin,[1] the most contemptible of all their scribblers. He is a Prussian, and has been in a subaltern office in the diplomatic department of that government. Whether he retired from

[1] Charles Theremin.

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that station dissatisfied, or was dismissed from it, I know not, but it was probably while he was secretary to the Prussian legation in London that he formed his attachments to the French revolutionary leaders. He has now been two or three years in Paris, and is constantly writing pamphlets for the Directory as he did before for the Committee of Public Safety. Paine is employed by them in like manner, and in the style for which Madame Roland judged him peculiarly fitted, that is, to wind up the drunkenness of a club or a tavern into frenzy. Madame de Staël and her friend Benjamin Constant[1] are enlisted in the same ranks, and labor in concert with all their energies to strengthen their old enemies now their new friends. I sent you the treatise upon the influence of the passions, and intimated to you the passions which produced it, and those which it was destined to gratify. Constant is Swiss, (for it is remarkable that all these courtiers of the Directory are foreigners to France,) and in pursuing the variations of Madame de Staël's destiny has written on both sides, for and against the prevailing system of measures since the adoption of the Constitution of the third year. I will send you one of his last productions.[2]

Amidst this literary constellation Barère[3] is a star of the first magnitude. He is indeed a Frenchman, the only one among them; but in every other respect was well qualified for the purposes for which he is employed. Part of his history is well known to you. The accident by which he escaped the sentence which was passed upon him, together with Collot d'Herbois and Billaud-Varennes, and which was executed upon them; the accident by which he afterwards

[1] Henri-Benjamin Constant de Rebecque (1767–1830).

[2] Probably *Observations on the Strength of the French Government*, of which Adams says in his *Diary* (Ms.), "wild and detestable principles."

[3] Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac (1755–1841).

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escaped from his prison, and that by which he has ever since remained at liberty, are explained and accounted for by these two publications. The practice of England sometimes commutes a capital penalty for transportation. They seem in France to have inverted the principle, and to have commuted transportation for the severer penance (to a liberal and independent spirit it would be so) of writing encomiums upon the Directory and the Constitution of the third year.

It is almost an universal and almost an unavoidable custom to connect controversial writings with the real character and principles of their authors: a natural and perhaps an useful prejudice leads us generally to reject as false and absurd whatever is told us by a man whom we know to be depraved. Yet the experience of all ages has shown examples of very bad men who have written and said very good things. In cases of this kind, the only sound rule of judgment is to consider the facts of such a writer as without a voucher, and his sentiments as without a warranty. Of themselves they cannot serve either as foundation of belief or as a source of moral conclusions. But they may stand upon their own ground, or be supported by any power other than that of confidence in the author. He may, therefore, be believed whenever he pronounces his own condemnation, or furnishes you with the materials of his own conviction. In this point of view both these works of Barère are objects of considerable curiosity. They may be viewed also as containing such doctrines as the French government wished to spread abroad at the time when they were written. And it is certain that they thought this man a valuable auxiliary. For at the late election for the members of the Legislative Councils, he was (without doubt by the influence of the government) chosen at some little village near the Pyrenees,

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though the Legislature at their first meeting declared the choice illegal, and never admitted him to a seat. I am fully persuaded, however, that if the party which is now victorious should be able to maintain its triumph, he will soon be brought forward again.

I have marked several passages, particularly in the work entitled "*De la Pensée du Gouvernement.*" Some of them, as remarkable for the ingenuousness, or rather the blushless impudence, with which he characterizes as the worst of tyrannies that very dominion of Robespierre under which he was so active and so obsequious an instrument; others as deserving notice for the address with which he courts the favor of the Directory for himself, and that of the armies for the Directory; and two or three which speak of the United States, and of the theory of balanced governments. You will be at no loss to guess whence he derived his assertion that in the United States, "England has caused to be introduced by adroit speculators, establishments *invented with views of political corruption and degeneracy*," and you will easily discover the connection between this doctrine and the advice to the Directory, to "rally *to the interest*, and to the commerce of the French Republic, the fruitful branches of the commerce of the United States which England has ravished from her."

The eulogium upon Montesquieu is a very ingenious and amusing thing.[1] It shows like the other work the partial return of the *opinion publique* to sense and wisdom. At the same time it indicates the points upon which the revolutionary prejudices and follies are still predominant. Turgot's dogma of rallying all authority to one center has been washed out of vogue in the blood of millions, and as it "has lived," Barère thunders with all his eloquence at the extreme im-

[1] *Montesquieu peint d'après ses Ouvrages.* (1797.)

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portance of the division of powers. He like so many others can flatter no madness but that which is armed with power; can bow to none but reigning errors, and pledge his faith to none but accredited lies. But if Montesquieu says a word in approbation of *confederations;* if he says they are the only means by which Republican government can be adapted to a large territory; if he speaks in other terms than those of anathema, concerning any other government than that of *la bonne Démocratie*, the government that is *to force people to be free;* if his opinions clash with any of the stupidities that have not yet sunk by their own weight from the stormy surface of the Revolution, Barère is no longer the admirer of Montesquieu. On the contrary he joins the full cry of anarchy and robbery against him. An old philosopher said that truth was to be preferred even to his favorite Plato; so Barère must think falsehood preferable even to his favorite Montesquieu. In general, there may be observed through both these books many wise, liberal and spirited sentiments of liberty, together with an apparent discouragement to views of conquest and military aggrandizement. Yet in one of them plainly transpires the Jacobin system of proselytism, where he mentions the new and powerful means of covering all Europe with great Republics; and in the other, when he say that "republican *armies* have been at all times and in all countries the last ramparts and the extreme asylum of liberty;" it may be clearly seen how well prepared he and his employers are for a Pretorian Prefect, or a Protector of French liberties.

As a short comment upon the purity of Barère's republicanism and attachment to the modern philosophy, I have taken from a recent work of Madame de Genlis an anecdote concerning him, and you will find it at the close of one of these pamphlets.

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I send likewise an English translation of Garat's memoirs,[1] which I have not hitherto had a good opportunity of forwarding to you, and am uncertain therefore whether you have ever seen them. They are among the most curious and interesting publications that have appeared from the pens of persons who have acted in distinguished situations in France. Garat tells his own story and endeavors to justify or apologize for himself. He was in fact one of those equivocal characters who endeavored to steer between the Gironde and the Jacobin parties so as to fall in with the triumph of either. He met with the usual fate of such personages, and was detested by both parties. By his own account he was in heart on one side and acted on the other, or at least made none of those exertions which his station required of him to counteract their proceedings, which however he is now willing to brand with all the horror and execration they deserve. But this book contains some very valuable details of the different views and purposes of the two great Republican factions, their modes of intrigue and perfidy for the destruction of each other, and the false and erroneous principles upon which their theories of liberty were respectively grounded. The author appears to great advantage in comparison with many of his coöperators in the Revolution, and there is in his manner of writing an apparent consciousness of integrity, moderation, and humanity, well calculated to obtain confidence had they not been so often assumed, and with equal assurance, by the most ferocious tigers that the circumstances of these days have let loose upon the human race. Crude, undigested ideas upon the very foundations both of moral and of political economy mark this man, as they do all the other apologists of them-

[1] Dominique-Joseph Garat (1749–1833), *Memoirs of the Revolution*, translated by R. Heron, and published at Edinburgh, 1797.

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selves upon the affairs of France. He is a man of letters, writes with spirit and elegance, and appears familiarly versed in the literature as well as the history of antiquity. Yet acquainted as he was with the uniform history of popular governments and democracies, and far from deficient as he shows himself to be in sagacity and knowledge of human nature, he talks of the divisions and animosities between the leaders of the parties as accidental misfortunes which might have been avoided, and seriously speaks of proposals to lay aside those dissensions and rancors for the purpose of uniting to support the Republic. Although this book was published more than two years ago, it contains information peculiarly interesting at the present time, when the very same parties after all their calamities and defeats are pursuing the same game, with nearly the same cry of liberty in their mouths, and the same practices of tyranny in their conduct.

You will have seen by the public prints that Edmund Burke died in the course of the month of July.[1] His executors have within these few days published three memorials upon French affairs written by him in the years 1791, 1792 and 1793.[2] I have sent you a copy of them.

If the several states and governments which are spread over the face of Europe are considered as composing a sort of confederated whole, their situation and circumstances appear to resemble in an extraordinary degree those in which the same portion of the earth were placed at the period when the Roman Republic fell under the ambition and talents of Caesar. There is at this time, as there was then, one simple fundamental principle upon which the whole fabric of European policy stands. A revolution is taking place which must entirely overthrow that principle; such was the case then. The ultimate consequence in that instance was the

[1] July 9.

[2] *Letters on the Regicide Peace*, 1796, 1797.

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total dissolution of the system by which Europe was governed, and centuries of barbarism; the novelties of this day are calculated to produce with much greater rapidity the same effect. If there be any accuracy in this view of things, the similarity between the character and genius of Burke and those of Cicero will appear wonderfully striking. It is one of the most remarkable circumstances common to both, that rising from an obscure origin, or as Paine expresses it, upon the democratic floor, they were the most strenuous and energetic defenders of the aristocracies, that is of the institutions upon which alone the *protection of property* subsisted. In one respect the modern philosopher, orator and statesman, was more fortunate than the ancient; he did not live to see the final and irretrievable ruin of his cause, nor did he perish the martyr of it.

I am &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, 19 September, 1797.

. . . . . .

The object of this memorial[1] undoubtedly was to prove, that the Constitution of 1791 just established in France, ought not to be acknowledged by this government; nor the minister then sent by the reigning party (at that time I think it was Chauvelin,[2] with the private mission of Talleyrand) received; but that the emigrant princes, and the party of France opposed to that Constitution and adhering to the monarchy, should be considered as the state and acknowledged as such.

It did not however meet the ideas of the ministers here. The causes which are unfolded in the course of the work, or

[1] Burke's *Letters on the Regicide Peace.*

[2] Bernard-François Chauvelin (1766–1832).

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at least some of them, defeated all its efficacy, and the author, in that instance, as in almost all the others of his political life, met the fate of Cassandra, his prophesies were true but they were not believed, and singular as it seems, they were not believed precisely because they were true.

I am afraid that this minute analysis of the first memorial has been tedious, but I have thought it necessary, in order to compare the present state of affairs with the statement of them at that time, and to draw from them such inferences as appear natural, and of importance sufficient to require serious consideration.

The perpetual, unalienable sovereignty of the *people* still remains professedly the fundamental principle of the ruling power in France. But an explanation has been given, which totally destroys all the consequences which they deduced from it at that time; and which, once admitted, reduces the question itself to an idle speculation, fit only for discussion in the schools. It is in the whole mass of the citizens, they say, and not in any majority however great, that they consider that sovereignty as residing. There were in truth two distinct principles involved in that which the French regenerators then professed: the unalienable sovereignty of the people; and the right of the taxable majority at all times to exercise that sovereignty, governed only by their pleasure. The artifice of the day was to blend the two together to produce the inference desired, insurrection. The first could do neither good nor harm, unless coupled with the other; the poison was in the mixture, and accordingly they have now carefully separated in the Constitution of 1795, the noxious from the innocent ingredient, and retaining the one have expressly disclaimed the other.

As they have made this and other important changes in their principles, they have also materially varied their

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means. They no longer prate about uniting the whole delegated sovereignty in a single assembly. They have abandoned the system of frittering up sovereignty into municipalities, indeed there is only one principle to which they still adhere of all those with which they have kindled the world into this awful conflagration; even to that they adhere only as a theory, for they have upon two great occasions violated it most outrageously in practice, and the only excuse, which they pretend to advance for themselves, is that without such extreme measures, the Republic itself would inevitably have fallen. They have retained, however, inflexibly their deadly animosity against all ancient governments and ancient establishments, as well as their disposition to foment the divisions and cabals in all other countries. They have realized their designs of aggrandizement, both on the side of Italy and of the Netherlands, and they have overthrown the governments of four ancient Republics, to substitute for them such governments as they think most suitable for the interest of France.

But the views of French ambition are not confined to the limits of Europe. They have been playing, and will continue to play, in the United States the same game which Mr. Burke foretells they will in *all* countries. We have, indeed, no ancient and abusive establishments to abolish. Our constitutions are all formed upon the principles of representative government; their friendship cannot communicate to us, nor their hostility force upon us their system of the rights of men. But it is their uniform and constant policy, adopted from the monarchy under which they were bred, to weaken foreign nations by divisions. Their designs upon our Constitution have long since been known to you. Paine in his letter to General Washington has let them out by pledging himself to attempt to effect a change. Necker dis-

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covers himself to have the same disposition, as I have heretofore mentioned. The motive is obvious; the only strength of the American government is in the attachment of the people to it, and in the constitution of the executive and Senate. By attacking, therefore, that part of the Constitution, they hope to render those branches of the government odious, and if they succeed, to give the finishing blow by assimilating them to their own Directory and Council of Elders.

We must not imagine that these pernicious purposes are entertained only by the present prevailing party. They will soon get sick of popular elections themselves, and of a plural executive too. They have long been sliding their system of adulation from the *people*, and bringing it to bear upon the *armies*. They cannot much longer escape the *substance* of a military government; perhaps they will even disdain the *forms* of their present Constitution. But be that as it may, they will always have some pretext for distinguishing, as Necker has done in his book, between us and themselves; and the more convinced they may become of the imbecility inseparable from their present system, the more desirous they will be to recommend it to us. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

LONDON, September 21, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

One of the first consequences, which have followed this event,[1] has been the rupture of the negotiations at Lille.

[1] The *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor (September 4), carried out by Bonaparte's lieutenant, Augereau, drove into exile Carnot and Barthélemy, who had leaned on the side of more moderate measures, and led to a purging of the Corps Législatif. King, from London wrote: "If I do not forget names, a majority of the Committee to whom Pastoret's speech on our affairs was referred, are among the members

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Lord Malmesbury has been ordered to quit France a second time, and has arrived here yesterday. What the fate of the negotiations with the Emperor will be, does not yet appear; but the prospects of peace, which have never been bright, seem now to disappear entirely. You will observe that at the head of the committee for concerting measures of safety in the Council of Five Hundred, after the purge, the name of Sieyès creeps out again, from the dark hole in which it has long been burrowing. It was seen, however, but for an instant, and then slunk back again to its lurking place. But Merlin de Douai, that burlesque upon the name and functions of justice, who wrote to the American consul,[1] that if we would break our treaty with Britain, the French tribunals would cease their *unjust* condemnations of our property; Merlin, the man mentioned in the letter of Colonel Fulton,[2] which was published in some of our newspapers, and who from that may be inferred to have entered long since into an organized plan for dismembering our union, has been placed in the station from which Carnot has been thus forcibly expelled. From the councils of such men as Sieyès and Merlin de Douai we are to expect nothing but the most unqualified injustice, under the Machiavelian mockery with which they have so long duped the world. Everything that envy and malice, both against our country and against you personally, can suggest, they will attempt. I speak it now without hesitation, because I am convinced that all the preparation possible to meet such conduct on their part *must be made*. But if our House of Representatives and our

now arrested. You will readily see how mischievous to us this success of the Directory may and probably will be." *To Alexander Hamilton*, September 9, 1797. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 228.

[1] Fulwar Skipwith.

[2] Samuel Fulton, an agent of Genet and in close touch with the French government. See *American Historical Review*, X. 270.

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executive do not harmonize together for the protection and defence of our citizens and their property, better than they have done for the last two or three years, we may boast of our government and Constitution as much as we will, the plain, unequivocal and lamentable fact will be, that neither of them will be adequate to the purposes for which all government ought to exist, and we shall be plundered and insulted at the pleasure of every foreign robber or bully, who may find a profit or a pleasure in attacking us.

Your observations with respect to the consequences of a revolution in England are undoubtedly just; should it be produced by the violence or the intrigues of France, it would never remove the deadly national hatred that burns at this moment with more violence than ever; but the French politicians are of opinion, and perhaps justly, that as a state, England will be much less formidable after a revolution than she now is, or than she has been for many years. A revolution they believe would draw as its inevitable attendant a long, bloody, and desolating civil war, which neither the population nor the wealth of this country can bear as France has done. They suppose that it would lead to the destruction of the British colonies in the West Indies, as it has to those of France, and from the same causes. That it would soon annihilate the British Empire in India, which at this moment hangs by the thread of a spider's web; and as the commerce and manufactures of this country lean entirely on those two frail crutches, a revolution, in the opinion of the Frenchmen, would snatch these supporters from the tottering hands of their rival, and down she would tumble with all her dropsical bulkiness, never to rise again. It is, therefore, as the profoundly inveterate enemies of this nation, that the French statesmen, who now rule, are desirous of producing a revolution here. It is true that Cromwell

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was much more powerful than either of the Charles's, and a revolution at this day would call forth the operations of another sort of energy, than that with which France has had hitherto to contend. But they have abundant confidence in themselves, and they have openly avowed a maxim sufficient to make them easy. It is, that their superiority of population and territory must always prove too strong for the mere ships of England. As to the miseries of war, they feel no sort of concern on their account. It is one of their opinions, that some foreign war will always be necessary to secure them their existence. They are thoroughly convinced that their own nation will never forgive them for the irreparable calamities, which they have brought upon their country, and would soon call them to the most rigorous account, if once relieved from the pressure of external war. These men have declared themselves in a state of implacable, unrelenting war with all the rest of mankind. They have advanced so far in the career of their hostilities, that they know their retreat is forever cut off, and their only hopes of life are in the violence of desperation. I am not exaggerating the statement of their views; you will see them exposed in all their depravity in the pamphlet of Benjamin Constant, one of their court writers, which I now send for your perusal. There you will find the people of France urged to submission to their rulers, because the atrocious crimes of these rulers are beyond the reach of punishment; there you will find laid down as a principle in so many words that, "when the wicked are powerful, far from unmasking them, we ought rather to add to their disguise." There he tells the French government and their adherents, that there is for them no amnesty but victory, and threatens all their opponents with an association of the Directory and the terrorists, to *grind their adversaries to dust.*

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The French revolution was commenced in the name of the people. In their name all its horrors have been palliated and excused; in their name the guillotine has mowed its thousands, and the grapeshot have swept off their tens of thousands. In their name, in that of their liberty, their equality, their fraternity, have the sublime inventions of the noyades and of the Republican nuptials shed a new gleam of light upon the brilliant illumination of the eighteenth century. For them, for their unlimited and unalienable sovereignty, have these deeds without a name, which make an humane mind ready to deny its own nature, and shrink from the name of man, been almost justified, always palliated as the unpleasant but necessary means for the attainment of a glorious end — the supreme dominion of the people exercised by a representative government.

They have got their representative government, but even at the moment of establishing it, they discovered their dread and jealousy of that very people who had been the perpetual burden of their whoop. They dared not go out of power at once, and contrary to the tenor of their boasted constitution, forcibly continued two-thirds of themselves in the legislative body, allowing the people only the choice of one-third new members. When the sovereign people resisted the provision, and insisted upon the exercise of their whole right, their arguments were answered by cannon balls, and between five and ten thousand of the sovereign people were slaughtered in the very streets of Paris, as a propitiatory sacrifice to the genius of the dying Convention. The subsequent election was protracted to the period of eighteen months, though the constitution had directed an annual choice. One third more of the legislature is renewed, and no sooner have the conventional leaders lost their majority by the succession of the two new thirds, than the representa-

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tives of the people express in every act their abhorrence and detestation of the revolution and its conductors. The counter-revolution was advancing with such rapidity, that nothing could prevent it but a new revolution, a revolution annulling all the choices of two-thirds of the sovereign people.

It is therefore unquestionably the merciless policy of fear, that dictates all the measures of the French government, both external and internal. It is with necessity, the tyrants' plea, that they would excuse their devilish deeds. As they are more and more sensible that they have offended beyond all hopes of forgiveness the people, they now fly for a refuge and succor to the armies. The armies show themselves willing enough to follow their trade of oppression, and in the late transactions have made no scruple of discovering their contempt for the *people* and their *representatives*. All this while they are using the names of liberty and equality, and the Republican constitution of the 3d year, with as much assurance and probably as much efficacy as if they had never been abused.

I have stated to you fully my opinion upon this state of things, because I am persuaded it will require the most serious consideration in our own country. All the nations of the earth must be prepared to see France, under a military government, by turns anarchical and despotic, and perhaps with all the democratical forms; with a country ruined, desolated, incapable of supporting a large part of its population; with an immense army inured to every danger, habituated to consider life as the cheapest of all human possessions, at once poor and prodigal, rapacious and dissolute, elated by extraordinary victories, and considering itself as the champion for the liberties of the human race; with a corps of officers partaking of all these qualities, and with generals

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of the first rate talents, unrestrained by any principle, human or divine. I believe, (and this opinion, though necessarily conjectural, is founded upon long reflection, and the most attentive observation of which I am capable,) that nothing in Europe will stand before them; it is a grapple for life and death between all the ancient establishments, and a new single military government of which France is to be the head, as Italy was that of the Roman Empire. But Europe at this time enjoys scarcely any liberties worth fighting for. The change will be for the worse but probably not much. Our case is widely different. Our laws, our liberties, everything that has ever been dear to our hearts will be brought in question. That we must contend for them, I have little doubt; that we shall eventually secure them, rescued from all the disgraceful fetters of foreign influence, I most firmly believe. The cause is substantially the same with that for which we have once fought and triumphed. It is the first and dearest of our earthly interests, the possession of our rights; our means are great, and only require to be brought into operation, and I have an undoubted confidence in the protection and favor of Providence, to support the real cause of justice and virtue.[1]

I remain &c.

[1] "On the presumption that you continue in town I have taken the liberty to direct Mr. Monro, whom I have left in my office, to apply to you for your advice and decision in any affair that may occur concerning which he may feel himself at a loss how to act." *Rufus King to John Quincy Adams*, Cardiff (Wales), September 22, 1797. Ms. On this day Adams received his commission and instructions for Berlin. They had been taken to Holland by General Marshall. Leaving Gravesend on October 18, he reached Hamburg at noon on the 26th. *Memoirs*.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

HAMBURG, 26 October, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The Spanish Minister Yrujo has been playing the little Genet or Adet; like them he has been very insolent and very absurd, while our government appears to take it with a coolness and forbearance, which at least proves its extreme respect for the privileged character of an ambassador, scandalously as it has been abused. This moderation may be carried too far. The howling of a wolf may be silenced only by powder and ball, but when lap dogs set themselves up to howl, they should be turned out of doors. Our treaty with Spain was a pretty thing upon parchment. But there is a certain salvo, by means of which liberality of contract is the easiest thing in the world. Spain has promised like a Castilian — she performs not even like a Jew; she does not perform at all. You see she will not give up the stipulated forts as territories, until we have settled with France, or until we take them.

Mr. Monroe has called upon the Secretary of State for the reasons of his recall; he seems to think that the tenure of the President's pleasure, expressed in his commission meant the pleasure of Mr. Monroe.[1] He is trying to make a noise, and add one more puff to the bellows of faction, but his breath happens to be weak. He talks about liberty, and enlightened principles, and despotism, and coalition, as much as Molière's Tartuffe talks of piety, devotion, the love of God and sin. Mr. Pickering has answered him by plainly referring to the constitutional principles, which made an assignment of the reasons demanded improper; but at the same time gives him to understand what the reasons were, and offers in his

[1] See *Writings of Monroe*, III. 73, *et seq.*

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individual character to tell him the reasons why *he* advised to it. This however, Mr. Monroe chooses to decline, and the offer appears to have vexed him. He is going to publish a pamphlet; for you know with us everything ends in a pamphlet, as in France all ends in a song.

I suppose the late naval action was almost or quite within your hearing.[1] I witnessed the rejoicings at its issue in England, but was far from participating in them. I felt for the peculiarly hard fate of our Batavian friends, crushed as they are between their allies and their enemies, as between the wheel and the wall. It gives me pleasure to observe that their minister in our country has continued prudent and discreet. I hope he will yet remain so, and at all events that we shall still be friends.

. . . . . .

Your obedient servant &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 108 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

HAMBURG, 31st October, 1797.

SIR:

A few days after I had the honor of writing you last from London, I received a duplicate of your instructions dated July 15, together with a copy of those bearing date the 17th. I shall pay all the attention to them which their importance requires and the circumstances will admit. It is, however, to my mind very questionable whether it will be expedient to propose the alterations suggested in your letters, except

[1] The battle of Camperdown, in which Admiral Duncan defeated the Dutch fleet, destroyed the power of the Dutch navy and dispelled any fear of an invasion of England from Holland. It was fought October 11. Murray describes the result. Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry*, 285.

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that relative to the embargo. The principle of making free ships protect enemy's property has always been cherished by the maritime powers who have not had large navies, though stipulations to that effect have in all wars been more or less violated. In the present war indeed they have been less respected than usual, because Great Britain has held more uncontrolled the command of the sea, and has been therefore less disposed than ever to concede the principle; and because France has disclaimed most of the received and established ideas upon the laws of nations and considered herself as liberated from all the obligations towards other states which interfered with her present objects or the interests of the moment. Yet even during this war several decrees of the French Convention, passed at times when the force of solemn national engagements was felt, have recognized the promise in the treaty of 1778, and at times it has been in a great degree observed. France is still attached to the principles of the armed neutrality, and yet more attached to the idea of compelling Great Britain to assent to them. Indeed every naval state is interested in the maintenance of liberal maxims in maritime affairs against the domineering policy of Britain. Every instance, therefore, in which these principles are abandoned by neutral powers which favor the rights of neutrality, is to be regretted as furnishing argument, or at least example, to support the British doctrines. These observations apply with more weight with regard to the Swedish treaty than to the other, as I believe Sweden is peculiarly attached to the liberal system, and entertains hope that it may finally prevail by the concurrence of all the maritime powers, excepting only Britain.

I left London on the 18th instant in a Hamburg ship and arrived here on the 26th. Tomorrow I purpose to proceed upon my journey to Berlin. Whether I shall find the King

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of Prussia, to whom I was accredited, yet alive is very doubtful, as he is unquestionably reduced to the last extremity, and for some time has not drawn a breath but by the assistance of some mechanical operation. I suppose there would be no difficulty at my reception should a new reign take place before my arrival; but of this I cannot speak with certainty. The time will, however, from this circumstance become peculiarly critical as it regards the north of Europe, especially as this event will combine with that of the definitive peace which is undoubtedly concluded between the Emperor and France. It was signed at Udine on the 17th instant.

Mr. Parish will inform you of his correspondence with the Imperial Ministers relative to the liberation of the prisoners at Olmütz.[1] Mr. Parish had heretofore taken several steps in behalf of M. La Fayette, and it appears that the Baron de Thugut[2] supposed he still held the office of American Consul here. In his letter to the Imperial Minister at this place, communicated to Mr. Parish, he says that the Emperor had made no engagement to liberate the prisoners upon the application of the French Directory, and that a principal motive inducing him to it was a wish to give a token of his regard for the United States of America, by a compliance with the application made on their part in behalf of La Fayette; and he adds that the Emperor will always be happy to give proofs of his disposition to cultivate the friendship of the United States.

An application had really been made on the part of the French Directory, but in a singular manner, since it was connected with a condition that the prisoners in whose favor it was made should not return to France. Since

[1] See *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 223–232.

[2] Franz von Thugut.

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the expulsion of Carnot and Barthélemi from the Directory there is less hope than before that any mitigation of this rigor will be shown.

It was required also by the Imperial Government that they should not remain longer than ten days at Hamburg, and an obligation was required that they should embark immediately for America. This however was dispensed with, and as the health of Madame La Fayette was too infirm to undertake a voyage over the Atlantic at this season, they are gone to pass the winter in Holstein, about fifty miles distant from this place.[1]

I have the honor &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 109 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

SIR: BERLIN, 10 November, 1797.

In my last letter, written at Hamburg, I informed you of my voyage from London to that place. I left it on the 2nd instant, and arrived here on the 7th.[2]

In this country the department of foreign affairs is committed to several ministers of state. The number is indefinite, and has been varied at different periods according to the pleasure of the sovereign. There are at present three: the Count de Finckenstein,[3] the Baron d'Alvensleben[4]

[1] It was at Wittmold, near Plöen. "He expresses his great regret at the differences between the United States and France. I am told that the decree proposed by Boullay de la Meurthe against the ci-devant nobles was specially directed against him; but it seems Barras and Buonaparte saw what use might in due time be made of it against them, notwithstanding exceptions in their favour for the present." *To Rufus King*, January 2, 1798. Ms.

[2] See Adams, *Memoirs*, November 2–10, 1797.

[3] Count Finck zu Finckenstein.

[4] Count Philip Charles von Alvensleben.

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and the Count de Haugwitz.[1] I have seen them all, and delivered to the first according to the usual custom a copy of my credential letter to the king, and also of the full power for the renewal of the treaty.

They all assured me that the king receives with great satisfaction this mark of attention from the United States shown by this mission, and that it will give him pleasure to continue the friendly and commercial connection subsisting between the two powers; but expressed their regret that his extreme illness renders it impossible for him at present to give audience to foreign ministers, so that I cannot deliver my credential letter. The Count de Haugwitz, particularly, whom I saw this afternoon, and who was yesterday at Potsdam with the king, informed him of my arrival and was witness to the regret expressed by him at being deprived of the pleasure of granting me the first audience. (I use the Count's own terms.) They further add a hope that in the course of a few days a favorable interval at least may occur, which will enable the king to give this audience. It is however extremely doubtful to me, whether such an interval will occur. The King's principal disorder is the dropsy, which is gaining upon him every day. He has lost the use of his limbs, so as even to be unable to sign his name; a succession to the throne may, therefore, be expected from day to day, and is so universally.[2] In that case, the credential letter which I have will not serve, and I cannot enter upon the business of the treaty without first receiving a new one. The perspective is far from being pleasant to me, but the case is irremediable.

[1] Christian August Heinrich Kurt, Count von Haugwitz (1752–1831).

[2] The King, Frederick William II, died at Potsdam, November 16, 1797, and was succeeded on the throne by his son, Frederick William III.

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There is here another minister [1] (from Malta) just arrived and under the same circumstance of being unable to deliver his credentials. He was charged with a letter from the Grand Master of the order of Malta to the President, which he requested me to transmit, together with a letter from himself to you. There has already been some correspondence between the two governments upon the subject to which the letters refer. The commerce of the Mediterranean in which we have hitherto scarcely participated at all, will undoubtedly become an important object both to the merchants and to the government of the United States. My information upon this article is so scanty that I can scarcely speak of it with propriety, but the negotiations for the treaties with the Barbary powers have undoubtedly procured to the government a knowledge of the circumstances, which require a particular and constant attention to everything that may contribute to the security of our navigation.

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 24 November, 1797.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I fully concur with your opinion upon the probable issue of the negotiation, upon which our Commissioners were sent to Paris. It is indeed likely that by this time their

[1] Mons. de Maisonneuve. "The order of Malta has itself suffered severely by the consequences of the revolution in France, and at this time is threatened by the French government, as are most of the weaker states in Europe. Its constitution, being founded altogether upon the principles prevailing in the days of chivalry, is especially obnoxious to the new principles which France is endeavoring to spread through the world." *To Secretary of State*, December 15, 1797. Ms. France objected to Maisonneuve's being received at Berlin, on the ground of his being a Frenchman and an "emigrant."

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business has been brought to a point, and I am in constant expectation of hearing they have been treated as General Pinckney was before. I have expressed myself upon this subject in my letters to America before I left London in terms as strong as I could use. Since the affair of 4 September, and the apathy with which it was submitted to throughout France, I have lost all hopes of any possible accommodation; and since Merlin of Douai, the man with whom the intrigue from our Western territory was carried on more than two years ago, the man who wrote to Skipwith, that if we would break our treaty with Britain, France would cease to treat us with *injustice*, since such a man has taken the place of Barthélemi, it would be blindness and worse than blindness for us to calculate upon anything but our force, our means of defence and annoyance.

It has been long my opinion, and I see no reason for changing it, that if we were openly and unequivocally at war with them, they could not injure us externally in our commerce so much as they do, while they retain the name of peace, and plunder our commerce in its defenceless condition. In this point of view they are by no means formidable enemies. The danger from them is of another nature. It is not the fury of the tusks, but the venom of the sting that we have to dread from them. No man knows this better than you, and I can only express my entire conviction of the justice of your observations upon this point, in your two last letters.

I have not ventured to write to either of the Commissioners since their arrival at Paris, for two reasons; the one has been my own wandering unsettled condition, and the other a strong apprehension, that before my letter could reach its destination the correspondent would be gone. I presume it is already too late to urge the opinion which you

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suggest, of *accelerating* the decision of affairs, though I am persuaded with you that the affectation of giving out to the world, that all the differences would be settled easily and amicably, was the result of perfidious designs. That system did not, however, long continue; the characteristic insolence and vanity soon overpowered the intentions of cool malignity, and our countrymen will not long be left in suspense upon the part which they have to act and the resolutions they must take.

I am at length possessed of the complaints, which the *member*[1] has thought proper to entertain you with, against me, and which it seems the Committee have concluded to address also to our government. These personalities, combining with those of the French Directory against another man, I suppose you will have no difficulty in understanding. For hunting up offences these people are as ingenious as the wolf of the fable, but I hope and trust they will not find us disposed to perform the part of the lamb.

If the citizen H[ahn] has *forgotten* the letter from the committee to me which he signed, and which was so offensive that I could not possibly forward a copy of it to our government without adding some observations to account for it, he can undoubtedly find it by recurring to the Registers of the committee. It is that letter and that alone, which is the justification of mine, and which made it my duty to write as I did.[2] I never wrote that the Batavian Republic

[1] Hahn, of whom Adams said in his *Diary* (Ms.) September 7, 1796: "Hahn is paralytic, and cannot stand or move himself. He is carried about from place to place in a chair by two persons. Yet he is very active, does a great deal of business, and appears to have a very cheerful temper."

[2] "September 29, [1796]. Answer at length from the Committee of External Relations upon the subject of my former memorials. It is, take it for all in all, as curious a piece of diplomatic composition as I have met with. From its defiance of facts and contempt of argument, I shall be tempted to suspect it to be the com-

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was nothing more than a province of France. I wrote that the members of the Batavian government could not refuse anything which the French government peremptorily and inflexibly required, whatever their reluctance might be at complying. I wrote that the dispositions of the Batavian government towards the United States were sincerely and honestly friendly, and as that assurance must appear altogether incompatible with the irritating and offensive style of the letter from the committee, I imputed that style to an unwilling acquiescence to the will of France, expressed to them upon the subject. I knew from precise information that France had required such a measure from them, and I believed and hoped they had taken it unwillingly; I had no idea that the letter would be published, and regret very much that it was. The circumstances which you noticed to H[ahn] are clear and indelible proofs of the fact as the power of France. He was one of the men who signed the treaty to give the hundred millions, and surrender all their frontier, and the port of Flushing, etc. He thinks me unfit to serve the United States for having written such a letter. I have no malice against him for entertaining this opinion, nor for his wish to have had an opportunity of demanding my recall; but I would ask him to lay his hand upon his heart and say, whether any man who signed such a treaty could be fit to serve the Batavian Republic, unless a clear, unequivocal, and uncontrollable necessity to acquiesce in such conditions were to serve him as justification? I have too good an opinion of the citizen's patriotism to believe he would ever have subscribed to such terms with a willing hand.

position of Noël. It behooves me now to be cool. The provocation of such a piece is so strong, that it is probably designed as such, and may be a French perfidy." *Memoirs.*

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But there is another circumstance still more applicable to the point of my statement, as tending to show the influence of France over the Batavian government in directing their conduct towards other powers. A few months before my letter to the Secretary of State was written, the Batavian government had at the positive and *inflexible* requisition of the French broken off all communication with Portugal, without even the pretence of a provocation. I have had good reason to believe that this measure was most specially disagreeable to the citizen H[ahn], and would tell him, could I see him, that he did unfeignedly lament the *necessity*, which dictated their compliance with this demand. He imputed it to that necessity, apologized for it from that necessity, and did not disguise his own regret at the compulsion, which exacted this determination. There was not so much as a hint that Portugal had given offence to them. The intercourse was suspended until Portugal should make peace with France. Having such a fact as this, flagrant before me while I wrote, could I possibly tell my government otherwise than that the Batavians must do the same with us, if France should positively require it. I should indeed have been a faithless and a treacherous public servant, if I had omitted to give such information, and it would have been certainly less kind to the Batavian government had I imputed their unfriendly language to ill-will, than it was to mention it as proceeding from necessity.

The citizen H[ahn] thinks I should have applied to him for the removal of the unpleasant impressions, which the letter of the committee occasioned, and, indeed, I had at the time serious thoughts of taking some such step to obtain a retraction of that part of the letter. I hesitated upon it for a considerable time, and finally concluded not to take it, because I despaired of success upon the consideration that

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their offensive intimations had been dictated by France, and that the letter was signed by six or seven persons. I knew that if I made the application without success, the consequence would only be to heap the measure of bitterness, and therefore as a minister of peace, desirous rather to extinguish than to kindle resentments, I preferred replying to them in such a manner that they might perceive what my sentiments upon their letter were, and apologizing for them in my report to my government.

There is however one good use which *you* can make of this affair. France it appears will quarrel with us. You can tell the citizen H[ahn] and the committee that they have hereby an opportunity to prove in the face of the world that they are not so totally at the mercy of France, and to refute my statement which has been so offensive to them. At any rate our government will wish to live in peace and amity with *them*. But we expect that they will not interfere in word or deed upon a difference with which they have no concern. If France, as the citizen hinted, should stimulate their *pride* against us, they may resist her instigations by pleading their *interest*, and surely the best proof they could give of their independence would be by one unequivocal instance, in which they should pursue the line of their interest in opposition to her will.

Till the next mail, farewell.[1]

[1] "In my last letter I made you some observations upon the Citizen Hahn's denunciation against me. But I did not tell you then what I have no doubt of, and it is, that in this instance the Citizen has poorly submitted to make himself the tool of French animosity, and has furnished another proof of that very subserviency, which he is so very angry with me for having intimated to my government as existing. He is himself responsible for that subserviency more than any other man in the Batavian Republic, and if the support of France was for a moment withdrawn from him, he would not dare to shew himself within the territory. I know this as well as he does, and have known it nearly as long. The real Batavian patriots have not forgiven the Citizen Hahn his share in paying an hundred millions

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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 111 [Timothy Pickering]

Berlin, 6 December, 1797.

Sir:

Soon after the date of my last letter, I applied to the Count Finckenstein, the eldest minister in the department of foreign affairs, to ascertain whether my reception here must necessarily be delayed until the credential letter to his present Majesty can be received from the United States. The Count said, that according to the common usage the credentials addressed to the late king could not serve for the present, and that all the foreign ministers resident here were obliged alike to wait for new credentials; but that, in consideration of the great distance of the United States, and the length of time which must necessarily elapse before a new credential letter can be received from thence, the ministers of the department for foreign affairs had proposed to his Majesty to give me an audience, in which I might express to him my own persuasion that the government of the United States would immediately, upon being informed of his Majesty's accession to the throne, send a new credential letter addressed to him, and that as soon as the king should make

of guilders to France, and the other oppressive and ruinous articles of his treaty with Sieyès; his share in Lucas's expedition to the Cape of Good Hope, and the consequent sacrifice without striking a blow to the English, and you best know whether I can add, his share in the sacrifice of poor de Winter and his fleet. The Committee of foreign affairs chuse to be silent upon some of the motives which impelled (I do not say compelled) them to send that fleet out, but those motives are no secret in Europe, and as Hahn was an influential member of the Committee at the time, he must answer for his part (more than a common part) of the obsequiousness, which made the only remaining Batavian bulwark a victim to the will of the French Directory, in opposition to his own better judgment, and to the clear, unequivocal and most important interest of his country." *To William Vans Murray*, December 23, 1797.

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known his determination upon this proposal, he, the Count, would give me notice of it. In the 3rd instant he sent again for me, and informed me that the king would readily grant me an audience, and that I should be informed in due time of the day upon which his Majesty should fix for the purpose; at the same time he delivered to me the letter, in the German language, from the king, addressed to the President, Vice President and members of the Congress of the United States, which I have the honor of enclosing herewith, and of which he gave me likewise an open copy, together with an annexed French translation. I inclose also copies of these papers.

The letter is the notification of the King's accession to the throne. It is in German, because my credential letter was in the language of the United States; and a French translation is annexed, as I had annexed a French translation to the copies of my credentials and full powers, which I communicated to the Count upon my arrival here. The next day being the 4th the Count informed me that the King had fixed upon the succeeding day, the 5th, at half past ten in the morning, for the audience. I went accordingly yesterday morning and was presented to his Majesty by the Count. I stated the circumstances which had prevented me from delivering my credential to the late king, and my belief that a new credential would be sent me as soon as possible from the United States, adding that I had no doubt but I should be warranted by my government, in assuring him of the interest which the United States take in his welfare and prosperity, and in reiterating to him the sentiments of friendship and good will, which I had in charge to express to his royal Father and predecessor. I mentioned at the same time the full power of which I am possessed for the renewal of the treaty. He answered, that he was much gratified

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by the marks of attention which the United States had shown to this government, and wished to assure them of his reciprocal good will and good wishes for their happiness and prosperity. That the similarity of the commercial interests of the two countries rendered the connection between them important, and might be productive of mutual benefit; and with regard to the renewal of the treaty, he should be happy in due time and place to give all proper attention to the subject, and to take the measures for the purpose. His Majesty then passed to some observations upon common topics, and made some inquiries concerning the United States and the late President, after which I retired. This evening I had an audience from the Queen mother, widow of the late king, and have requested others of the princes and princesses of the royal family conformably to the common usage at this court.[1]

I have the honor &c.

TO JOHN ADAMS

BERLIN, 16 December, 1797.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

Upon receiving in London my commission to this court and credential letter to the late King I proposed immediately for the shortest and least expensive possible conveyance hither. A particular circumstance rendered the time peculiarly critical as related to my domestic convenience. It was, however, what I could not regard, and I lost not a moment of time on that account. We embarked on board an Hamburg merchant ship directly from London to Hamburg on the 18th of October. Our passage was extremely

[1] See Adams, *Memoirs*, December 4–6, 1797.

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rough and stormy, but not very long, since we landed at Hamburg on the 26th of the same month. We remained there but a very few days, left it on the 2nd and arrived at Berlin on the 7th of November. Immediately upon my arrival I applied to the ministers in the department of foreign affairs, and proceeded both with regard to the business here, and that of Sweden, as I have related in several short letters to the Secretary of State, the only ones which nothing could warrant me to postpone, and which therefore I snatched every possible moment to write. What they contained it were needless to repeat to you.

The journey at land from the badness of the roads and of the drivers was worse than the voyage at sea; yet as we had all borne it tolerably well, I began to flatter myself that we should suffer nothing further from it beyond the fatigue and continual anxiety on the way. But the third day after our arrival my wife was taken violently ill; for ten days I could scarcely leave her bedside for a moment. Her illness, from which Heaven be praised she appears now to be in a great measure recovered, has only left us to hope that it has not been materially and permanently injurious to her constitution. She was scarcely risen from bed when my brother was seized with an alarming inflammatory sore throat accompanied with an high fever, and many symptoms threatening an attack of the rheumatism which has heretofore afflicted him. He too however most happily escaped that evil, and after an illness of eight or ten days recovered to a better state of health I think than he has before enjoyed these eight months.

As there has been no minister from the United States received before me, and as I came without having any acquaintance here, I have found my introduction at the court and to the princes embarrassing enough. I have been,

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however, perfectly well received everywhere. The government is very apparently pleased with the mission as a mark of attention from the government of the United States, and probably specially gratified that they should have sent a minister here, not having already one at Vienna.

The difficulty which arose with regard to my credentials, which were addressed to the late King and which it was impossible for me to deliver, as he was actually dying at the time of my arrival and expired within ten days after, has been related to the Secretary of State. The new King has however by giving me a private audience [1] recognized me as minister accredited to his predecessor, and I now stand in the same predicament with the other foreign ministers who have not yet received the renewal of their credentials.

The accession of the present king has been a period of much expectation, as it has been supposed that it would be followed by important changes in the system of the cabinet. The internal changes may possibly be considerable but they will not I think be immediate, nor perhaps very rapid. As to the external policy, there is hitherto no appearance of any probable alteration. The ministers in the department of foreign affairs remain the same. They are three: Count Finckenstein, who has held the place nearly fifty years; the Baron d'Alvensleben, whom you may have seen as Prussian Minister at the Hague, where he succeeded the Baron de Thulemayer; [2] and the Count Haugwitz, a Silesian, the principal acting minister in the office, though and it may be because the youngest. The two former of these gentlemen are characterized in a book of considerable celebrity, both on account of its author and the nature of its highly libellous and often slanderous contents.[3]

[1] December 5.

[2] See Adams, *Memoirs*, November 10, 1797.

[3] Mirabeau, *Histoire Secrète de la Cour de Berlin*, 1789.

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There is an apparent coolness between this court and those of Vienna and of London. The House of Austria seems indeed the perpetual rival of that of Brandenburg. The English alliance seems to have been barely temporary and to be altogether dissolved. The situation with France is a distant and suspicious amity without cordiality, but without the least probability of renewed hostility. With Russia there seems to be a better understanding than there was before the death of the late Empress. The King though quite a young man is not without some experience, and is said to have a very military turn. This indeed can hardly be otherwise here, in a country the only basis of whose power is military and which is little more than a nation of soldiery. His habits of life are domestic, distinguished by great simplicity, and a laborious activity. There is in his manners a gravity approaching to harshness, but nothing that betokens weakness, indolence or dissipation, the most dangerous of all qualities to a sovereign, and especially at the present time.

. . . . . .

I am your affectionate son.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 9 January, 1798.

. . . . . .

The antifederalism and servile devotion to a foreign power still prevalent in the style of some of our newspapers is a fact that true Americans must deplore. The proposal for establishing a Directory in America, like that of France, is no new thing. They have given one to their Cisalpine Republic, prepared one which they still destine for their Batavian Republic, and are upon the point of forcing one upon Switzer-

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land. They purpose even to make the same present to the Republic of Albion, as was honestly confessed recently by a member of the Council of 500, who in a debate upon the intended expedition, kindling into the most fervid enthusiasm of prophesy, declared himself fully convinced that England is now upon the very verge of the precipice, that her total and irretrievable ruin is at hand, and that in a few months she will have a Directory. But they are tired themselves of that very constitution, which their tools so warmly recommended to others. They pay, indeed, very little regard to it. By means of the armed force the Directory have reduced the two legislative councils to a subserviency nearly absolute to their will; they have no more liberty of the press than at Constantinople. They declaim against the Constitution on the very bosom of the legislature, and after having exercised all the powers of despotism to annul most of the popular elections of the last year, they are about to exercise them again to confine the votes of the next elections to their own creatures.

You will be fully convinced before you receive this that we have nothing but evil to expect at their hands. Their newspapers have lately been proclaiming that the Kaskaskias and another *peuplade*, both of whom they represent as *citizens of the United States* and forming part of the American confederacy, had revolted, assumed the three-colored cockade, and determined to live only under the laws of the French Republic. They tell this with much exultation, and announce that these facts together with the obstinacy of the American government *in favor of England*, betoken an approaching political convulsion in the United States.[1] They know full well the aversion of our government against

[1] "Parlez Américains, dites quels sont directement ou indirectement vos vrais dominateurs." From a declaration of the Directory, November 22, 1797.

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war, and therefore even now, although they levy it, they do not proclaim it against us. The Directory propose to take and confiscate as lawful prize every vessel and cargo, any part of which shall be the produce of British manufactures or of British dominions, without any regard whatsoever to neutral property.

. . . . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 113 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 15 January, 1798.

SIR:

. . . . . .

I have frequently met here in company their Minister at this Court, the citizen Caillard,[1] whom I had formerly known as secretary of the French legation at St. Petersburg. He has been remarkably civil and obliging to me, but apparently anxious to discover what I am here for, and what I am doing. His curiosity sometimes amuses me, upon considering how little all the pains he can take will discover. Some days ago he began of his own accord a conversation with me upon the subject of the difficulties between our governments, by observing that he hoped they would come to an amicable adjustment, as the interest of both nations so clearly and unequivocably recommended harmony and a good understanding to both. I assured him of my most cordial concurrence in this sentiment, and that it was my most fervent wish, as I was fully persuaded it was that of my government, to see all the mutual causes or ideas of complaint removed, and a perfect friendship restored. He then said that he

[1] Antoine-Bernard Caillard (1737–1807).

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supposed our treaty with Great Britain was the only thing in the way, and that if we would deal frankly and candidly with them upon the subject,[1] the matter might easily be settled. "If," said he, "the American government would freely acknowledge, that for a moment they despaired of our Republic, and upon observing the numerous foreign enemies we had upon our hands, and that most abominable and horrid *reign of terror*, that was prevailing in our internal administration, concluded it was impossible we should stand it out long, and then consented to make the treaty with Britain, we might easily come to an understanding, and should acknowledge that such opinions and conduct had strong motives and reasons for support; but if you will inflexibly maintain against all opposers that the treaty was not contrary to the interests of France and your engagements with us, what can we say to you?" "Indeed" said I, "whether the operation of the treaty has in any particular been unfriendly to the *interests* of France is what I am not prepared to discuss, but of this I am certain, that nothing of that nature was *intended* by the American government; and as to our engagements, they are specially and expressly preserved inviolate by a formal stipulation in the British treaty." "But," said he, "a general proviso protecting former engagements in a treaty has very little weight, when specific articles in the same treaty are contradictory to the tenor of such previous engagements. In the year 1785 the Dutch made a treaty with France, and in the year 1787 they made a treaty in direct opposition to it with England. In the latter of these treaties there was a provision, like that which you mention, reserving all former engagements, but everybody

[1] Caillard "delivered a panegyric in favor of candor and frankness; said he had no finesse, but always went to work roundly and plainly. 'I am no orator as Brutus is,' etc." Ms. *Diary*. January 15, 1798.

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knew that it meant nothing at all, for the two treaties were utterly irreconcileable together." "Give me leave," I replied, "to decline a discussion of the two Dutch treaties, and to observe, that if there is any such article in our treaty with Britain contradictory to our previous engagements with France, the government of the United States may reasonably expect that the individual article, and the specific contradiction, should be pointed out to them, and I have no doubt but that in such case they will do everything that France can require to remove the cause of complaint."

"Why," said he, "the subject is not within my province. I have only a *general view* of it, and therefore cannot now indicate the particular articles; but I have a general idea that the treaties are not consistent with each other." Here the conversation terminated, and I have thought it expedient to give you an account of it as accurate as possible, because it is a specimen of a style of argument and complaint very common among the French upon our treaty with Great Britain. The idea of attributing that treaty to the distressed and calamitous situation of France at the time when it was made, is a favorite one with those Frenchmen who advocate moderation and kindness towards us; but it is an idea which, in my opinion, we ought never to concede, first because I am fully persuaded that it is unfounded, and secondly because if it were once granted their next pretence would be, that we ought in reason and equity to make therein compensation and indemnity for having entertained a mistaken opinion of their affairs, which in its consequences operated to their injury.[1]

[1] "I have had some conversation with the French minister here [Caillard] concerning the new law against neutral navigation, which he admitted as contrary to the law of nations, if it were a permanent measure. But he says it is only a necessary retaliation against the English, and if the neutral nations will suffer the English to take all their vessels, the French must do the same. I told him, that without being disposed to justify or apologize for the predatory practices of England, which

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Just about the time when the French Minister here was holding this conversation with me, the Directory was proposing to the legislature a law, which I presume before this has been passed, declaring that a neutral flag shall no longer protect enemy's property, and that every vessel, laden wholly or in part with articles of British produce or manufacture, shall with its cargo be lawful prize, be the property whose it may.[1] This measure requires no comment. Its character in reference to the laws of nations cannot be mistaken. Its effect must place us at least in a state of passive war with France — but of war unproclaimed. For they know that by an open declaration of war, they must lose some of that influence in their favor, which they depend upon to palliate all their aggressions, and to palsy every nerve of our defence.

The effect of this proposed law must in a considerable degree interrupt our commerce with Great Britain, as it will subject all our importations from that country to capture and condemnation. Whether its ultimate consequences

I utterly detested, I must say that they never had been carried to an extent anything resembling this regulation. That besides, England was now making indemnification for many of the depredations committed under color of her authority. That if the principle of retaliation alleged as a warrant for this new measure on the part of France were founded, there could never be any such thing as neutrality in any maritime war; for that it would require every neutral power to make war upon the first instance of improper capture of a vessel under her flag. 'No,' said he, 'that is not necessary, but the neutral power should show a firm countenance and determined resolution to maintain its rights, and send all its commerce under convoys.' I asked him, what a power was to do that had no ships of war to give as convoys? He said they must raise sufficient for the purpose." *To the Secretary of State*, January 30, 1798. Ms.

[1] The message of the Directory to the Council of Five Hundred was dated 15 Nivôse (January 4, 1798), and was printed in the *Rédacteur*, January 6. Two days later the American Commissioners in France sent a copy of this message to the Secretary of State, adding that "We can only report that there exists no hopes of our being officially received by this government, or that the objects of our mission will be in any way accomplished." See *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 151.

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will be more extensive or not, whether the measures of a just defence, which I most cordially hope will be taken, shall terminate in a state of open and unequivocal war or otherwise, it becomes peculiarly important to redouble our attention to the means of extending our commerce with other nations besides either France or Britain.[1]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 27 January, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The proposal of the Directory, to make prize and confiscate every vessel and cargo infected by a single parcel of goods of British produce, has been adopted by the Five Hundred *without discussion.*[2] Villers the reporter took the

[1] "I mentioned in my last letter the new law proposed by the French Directory to the legislature, declaring all goods or merchandise of English produce or manufacture lawful prize, together with every vessel on board of which they are laden and its cargo, be the proprietors who they may; and forbidding the entrance into French ports of any vessel that may have touched at a British port excepting only in cases of stress of weather. The Council of 500 adopted this law *without discussion* upon a report made by Villers, in which he asserts that the President of the United State in full Senate makes the same speeches that Pitt makes in the Parliament of England. Villers also declares that since the war there has not been a merchant vessel under English colors floating upon the ocean, and therefore that all American vessels, having English goods on board must be considered as English in disguise." *To the Secretary of State*, January 30, 1798. Ms.

[2] This proposal, and the message from the 500 are in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 151. They were adopted by the Ancients, January 18, 1798, and were communicated to Congress by the President, March 5.

"This is carrying the principles of maritime war to an extent to which no country ever thought of carrying them, and which must render the existence of a neutral trade, particularly in the case of the United States absolutely impossible." *Grenville to Rufus King*, January 13, 1798.

"As the war continues and as it now seems scarcely possible for the United States

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occasion to affirm, that the President of the United States made in full Senate the same speeches that Pitt makes in the Parliament of England, and full of outrages against France. This Villers, with about as much foundation, asserts that there is not a single merchant vessel under English colors floating upon the ocean. Judge of the situation of

to avoid becoming a party in it, you will doubtless be determined by your instructions of the 15th and 17th of July last in renewing our treaties with Prussia and Sweden, to reject the article in each which stipulates that free ships shall make free goods. With this prospect before us no considerations occur which should induce its admission but the reasons suggested. Instructions are now strongly enforced by the law of the French Republic before cited, if, as Mr. Fenwick supposes, though general in its expressions, it is really and exclusively intended to operate against Americans. In this case a renewal of that stipulation is positively to be refused. The Swedish and Prussian commerce will then be only on the footing of the commerce of Denmark, with whom we have no treaty; and if we must be involved in the war, it will be desirable that the commerce of those three powers in relation to the United States should rest on one and the same principle. But if this iniquitous French law exists, (and we have no room to doubt it,) will all the northern Powers submit to it? We hope not; we hope that the inordinate ambition of France and her avowed design to subjugate all Europe (of which she already calls herself '*the* Great Nation, the Conqueror,') will excite the resistance of all the powers, whom her arms have not reached and rouse anew those whom the course of events have induced to submit. At present Britain appears to be the only bulwark against the universal domination of France by sea, as well as by land. It is plain that those powers who have avoided becoming parties in the present, and have congratulated themselves on their superior policy and good fortune, will finally have no reason to rejoice. They were only reserved for future plunder and oppression. This is now strikingly verified in respect to the United States. Her exertions have been as unexpected, as her victories have been unexampled. Instead of stipulating for even future compensation for the many millions of which she has authorised her cruisers to rob us, she demands immediate contributions to the enormous amount of her depredations, making these the measure not of rendering justice, but of increasing her oppression. A full knowledge of her treatment of our envoys and of the propositions made to them, would confound her partisans among us, convince our citizens in general of the impossibility of preserving their property and independence but by resistance, and produce general unanimity in the measures requisite for that end; or if I am mistaken in this opinion, we are already under the yoke of foreign domination." *Secretary of State* [Pickering] *to John Quincy Adams*, Philadelphia, March 17, 1798. Ms. (in cipher).

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a country in the legislature of which the most important measures are taken without discussion, upon reports of such a description as this.

The northern powers cannot but consider this regulation as contrary to their rights, but they will do nothing. They are all, except Russia, so afraid of the *great nation*, that they will only shrink back from every stab she aims at them, and vainly hope to escape from that which will finally be pointed at the heart. Sweden, indeed, as you know, is upon terms as bad with the terrible Republic as we are, but as long as she can keep her commerce in the Baltic protected, she will abandon the rest to the chances of depredation. Denmark, though not openly at variance is by no means well with the French, but she dreads above all things a war, and her internal weakness, infused by the spirit of Jacobinism, is perhaps greater than in any other part of the North. Here, though the French are thoroughly detested, yet the policy of the government is most decisively pacific. They will not be allowed however to come into Hanover, nor as I believe to levy more contributions on Hamburg; very explicit declarations upon this subject have been made on both sides.

I feel very much obliged to you for the hints in your letter, of which I shall endeavor to make some use if possible. I am apprehensive, however, that the prospect of extending their colonial territories is an object too remote from the views of either northern power, to make any project for the purpose allure them with hopes of its practicability.

You will, perhaps, not be surprised to hear that I have not met with civilities and kindness from any of the foreign ministers here more than from those of France and Spain; both of them are very friendly and obliging. The former [1] has shown a real disposition to do me kind offices, and the

[1] Caillard.

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little services which are so useful to a total stranger in a new situation. We have conversed, too, very freely upon the subject of the differences between our governments. I believe him very well intentioned for their settlement, but I suppose that since the fructidorian affair, he himself hangs to his office by a slender thread. He is very generally esteemed and liked here. He complains, like the rest, of our treaty with Great Britain, and would have us aplogize for it, by saying that we were frightened from our French alliance by the gorgon terrors of Robespierre's government, and the multitudes of external enemies, who then assailed the French Republic. He says the treaty is inconsistent with our previous treaty with France. I ask him to specify the inconsistent article, which he declines, alleging that as the matter does not properly belong to his province, he has only a general idea of the subject.

The Spanish minister [1] appears to be alarmed at the news published in the gazettes that the Natchez and Kaskaskias have assumed the three-colored cockade. He has inquired of me concerning the fact, of which my letters, though later than the account in the public prints, say nothing. Of course I could neither confirm nor refute the story, but I have given him to understand that beyond all doubt, his and our allies have profound designs in that quarter, and have been tampering with the Indians there to secure their assistance. By a letter from London I hear they have equally been tampering with the slaves in Carolina, and it is further added that two Frenchmen have been convicted and executed at Charleston as incendiaries.

I am very glad that Mr. Thomas Pinckney takes the place of Mr. Smith,[2] because upon the whole I hope he will be

[1] Marquis de Musquitz.

[2] William Smith, United States minister to Spain.

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right, though I doubt whether he will altogether fill the vacancy. Smith you know was in the very first line. Mr. P[inckney] means perfectly well, but of his political firmness I have some doubts, and he holds certain tenets in my opinion of very dangerous tendency. He introduced a very good amendment in the answer to the President's speech, substituting an expression of less energy, at a place where there was perhaps more than enough.[1]

"The Douglass and the Percy," aye, my dear Sir, if your prognostications are not rather too sanguine, they may well be confident against the world in arms.[2] If we can only have that union of sentiment, which supported us through one glorious struggle, we may smile at all the vaporing of the grand nation, and bid defiance to all the fire, and sword, and pestilence, and what is worse than all, to the pestilential principles of the terrible Republic. I will hope it; but the Blounts and the Randolphs are too thickly sown in the fields of our legislation, not to choke and smother the growth of much fair and honest patriotism among us. In these times the traitors from bribery are nothing in comparison with the traitors from principle. Treachery is organized into a system, rooted into every passion that actuates the species,

[1] Mr. Pinckney "instead of saying 'we shall insist upon the same justice from others,' etc., thought it would have the same effect, and the terms would be less objectionable, if the passage read thus: 'Nothing shall be wanting on our part to obtain the same justice from others,' etc. The expression used, he said, might be perfectly justifiable, but, if we could obtain what we wished without the possibility of giving offence, he thought that mode ought to be preferred." *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress, 645.

[2] "By a French paper I see Mr. Thos. Pinckney *is in* for Charlestown. This, if he is perfectly of the right sort, will break that phalanx which has brought us to the brink of war, and I believe that the late events of France will open his eyes completely. This is a good symptom, and let it console you, for rely on it, the South will get right, first from division, and at length from general conviction. Then with New England, we are 'the Percy and the Douglass.'" *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, January 15, 1798. Ms.

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and preached into the conscience as a moral and political obligation. Take up the lists of the present House of Representatives, and count over the members who, next to France and French doctrines, love their country better than anything, and tell me whether the people must not choose again, before we can expect a clear unequivocal majority, who love their country better than France. When people choose again, will anything better result from the election? The same treachery to their own interests runs through them, and every third man is at the bottom of his heart at war with every two others. In that war his countrymen are his enemies, and France is his ally. Notwithstanding all this, I am confident we shall finally be victorious in the struggle. Nature has given us the most effectual security against any permanent French domination. By attempting to establish it, France can only provide for herself a defeat. She can never hold us as she can the Batavians, or the Cisalpines, or even the poor Helvetians, whose turn to be devoured is now come.

Have you seen Hamilton's vindication of himself against a charge of speculation? This affair must injure him with the rigid moralists, and makes him liable to a sort of censure, which he acknowledges and which I cannot but consider as just.[1] But in the conduct of those who compelled him to uncover his nakedness to the public, there is something much worse than his offence. There is a skulking, cowardly, malignant wish to stigmatize him with corruption, without daring to assert it. Monroe especially has shown himself at this time, what he was when he set Tom Paine to howl at his benefactor Washington, silencing him in word, while

[1] Hamilton's pamphlet, *Observations on certain Documents contained in Nos. V and VI of "The History of the United States for the year 1796."* See *Works of Hamilton* (Lodge), VI. 449.

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he instigated him in deed. There is no distinction of weapons in the modern philosophy; poison is just as freely used as the sword.

This war, I imagine, will be every war in which France shall be engaged, as long as she holds the control of Batavian affairs, and she thinks the cooperation of the Dutch can do them any good. Your endeavors to preserve our peace with Holland *at all events*, are highly meritorious, and the desire of our government to that effect, is a strong proof that they wish to harmonize with all the world. For if the Batavians will insist upon quarreling with us, we have no reason to dread the issue of the contest with them. They surely can do us very little harm, and they know very well that we can do not a little to them. Whatever the event may be, I am sure the enmity of France can never be so fatal to us as her friendship has proved to them.

The proposal of a loan from the United States to France is not a new idea; they have long flattered themselves with the expectation of such a sop as that. I dare say those of our own people, who instruct them in the measures to take with us, have advised them to keep it out of sight.[1]

[1] General Pinckney thus described the situation of the Commissioners in a letter to Rufus King, December 14, 1797: "We are not yet received, and I think it very probable we shall not be. It is said Barras and Neufchâteau are for receiving us, and attempting to obtain money from us by negotiation. Merlin and Rewbell think it will be in vain, and are for sending us away immediately. La Revellière is undecided; but the whole of them are undoubtedly hostile to our government, and are determined, if possible, to effectuate a change in our administration, and to oblige our present President to resign. . . . Attempts are made to divide the envoys, and with that view some civilities are shown to Mr. G[erry] and none to the two others. I am in hopes such attempts will be without success. The American Jacobins here pay him great court. Since writing the above, we have received another unofficial message from Mr. Talleyrand to meet the same persons as had formerly conversed with us, without their being officially authorized. This we have pointedly and unanimously refused; declaring we would have no communication

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I have been hoping to see them bring it forward openly, from the belief that it would operate well, as you conjecture, in America. Yet the argument is close at hand, why not pay tribute to France as well as to Algiers?

Most faithfully yours.

TO JOHN ADAMS

BERLIN, 31 January, 1798.

MY DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I have met here several gentlemen in the diplomatic line who claim an acquaintance with you during your residence in Europe. The Baron d'Alvensleben, now one of the ministers in the department of foreign affairs, and the Baron Schultz von Ascherade, now minister from Sweden here, represented their respective courts at the Hague when you were there in 1788 just before your return to America. Upon my arrival here I found the Baron de Rosenkrantz, Minister from Denmark. He was either secretary of the Danish legation or chargé des affaires in Holland at the period of

on the subject of our missions with persons not officially authorized to treat with us. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 260.

The American commissioners were not alone in suffering this approach from the Directory or some of its members. "Portugal gave money as a preliminary to the negotiation of the late treaty with France, by a secret article of which she also stipulated a loan, part of which was actually paid at the signature of the treaty. This money enabled the Directory to march the army who effected the Revolution of the 18th Fructidor." *Rufus King to the American Commissioners*, November 24, 1797. The British Cabinet "gave a decided negative to a proposal of peace made by the Directory thro' Talleyrand; the project was in detail, and the terms more favorable to England than those demanded by Lord Malmesbury at Lisle; the price was a bribe of a million sterling to be divided among Directors, ministers, and others. Talleyrand's department was to share one hundred thousand pounds sterling. I could name the persons employed, the stages and every circumstance of the overture." *King to the Secretary of State*, December 23, 1797. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 245, 261.

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your reception there. All these gentlemen have desired me to present them to your remembrance. The Baron de Rosenkrantz was peculiarly obliging to me upon my first arrival, sought me out and rendered me many of the kind services which are necessary to a total stranger in a novel situation. He has since been appointed by the Danish cabinet to attend the Congress at Rastadt, where he now is, though to return here after the Congress. In the meantime there is left here only a chargé des affaires. I met him in company last evening. He inquired of me whether the United States had a minister at Copenhagen. You remember what I wrote you from the Hague of similar intimations given me there. This gentleman, upon my answering, that we had not, repeated the same topics which had been urged by the Danish legation at the Hague, of the commercial relations between the two countries and the similarity of their maritime interests. There have been so many of these advances from Denmark that it seems to me they deserve some attention; considering especially that the pass of the Sound is theirs, and that the whole Baltic trade, that of Russia, Sweden, and most of the *direct* commerce that we can ever have with Prussia, will thus depend much upon their control.

The French minister here, Caillard, remembered me as an old acquaintance and interpreter for Mr. Dana at St. Petersburg, where he was at that time secretary of the French legation. He has been very civil and obliging to me, and I believe wishes for a conciliation between our countries. I have related to the Secretary of State the substance of conversations I have had with him relative to our affairs.

The only ministers of foreign powers with whom I have had no communication, other than an exchange of cards, are the Prince Reuss the Austrian and Count Panin[1] the

[1] Nikita Petrovitch Panin.

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Russian envoys. The former seldom appears except when the indispensable etiquette requires his attendance at court. The Emperor's Ambassador you can imagine will not readily be a favorite at Berlin. The King is now ill with the measles; when he first was taken and before the nature of his disorder was ascertained, a report was freely circulated that he had caught the scarlet fever by infection carried to him by Prince Reuss at an audience which he had just after visiting a person [1] sick of that distemper. Since the measles have become unequivocal the rumor has dropped, and only leaves evidence of a disposition somewhere to fasten odious imputations upon the Imperial minister. The King is attended by an *English* physician,[2] who first spread the idea tracing the royal illness to Prince Reuss. I believe he was honest in the opinion. I have had in my own family too good reason to be satisfied with his skill and goodness of disposition, to suspect him of designing an unfounded report so necessarily prejudicial to an innocent man. But when conjecture looks round for the origin of an *unpleasant* effect, we may fairly conclude that cause upon which it most readily fixes not to be a remarkably pleasant one. I believe that I have already intimated to you that I have had reason to think the mission from the United States here peculiarly agreeable from the circumstance that they had sent none yet to Vienna. It is a sort of precedency of compliment with which they feel themselves flattered. But the sentiments at Vienna from the same circumstance will naturally be different and opposite. This may perhaps account for the distance which Prince Reuss observes towards me, which I should not perhaps have remarked but for its strong con-

[1] Prince of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

[2] A Dr. Brown, an Englishman, who had been one of the court physicians to Frederick William II.

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trast with the apparent earnestness of notice that I have received from all the court here, and from all the foreign ministers excepting him and Count Panin. There may be something of the same kind in his motives, and I must also add that in both cases it may be the mere effect of personal character, or of accident. You know that when Lafayette was liberated the Austrian Cabinet at least endeavored to make merit of it towards the United States, by saying that the Emperor consented to it in consequence of the application from America, and expressing his goodwill towards us; and perhaps you may have noticed that this happened just at the time when the European prints announced the American mission to Berlin. Since the House of Austria has become mistress of the state of Venice, the prospect of its becoming a maritime power of importance has very much increased, and if we get fully into the Mediterranean, we shall certainly have considerable commercial relation with her dominions.

I mention these things to you because I am persuaded you will attribute them to their true and proper motives. It is the interest both of Britain and France to contract and narrow our connections with all the other European powers. No one better than you knows how inflexibly that policy was always pursued by France under her monarchical government; she has not now abandoned it. The writers of the Directory even now exultingly threaten that if we do not appease their wrath, we shall make no more treaties unless with the Indians; and the citizen Caillard the other day told me that if France should succeed in this expedition against England, (of which he was far, he said, from being sure) she would then proclaim the universal and unlimited liberty of the seas, and there should thenceforth be *no more treaties of commerce.*

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The partisans of Great Britain in our country have favored the very same system from the same principles, though of opposite application. As England wants to keep all our commerce to herself, she very naturally is averse to the means which are calculated to extend it elsewhere. Both these descriptions of people have known very well how to take advantage of the popular arguments which promote their views. They have told us that we have nothing to do with the affairs and quarrels of Europe, and that a diplomatic intercourse with its governments would tend to involve us unnecessarily in its wars, and they have alarmed us with calculations of the expense to which every additional minister in Europe would subject the people of the United States.

The experience of the last six years has abundantly shown how impossible it is to keep us disconnected with the affairs of Europe, while we have such essential mercantile connections with the great maritime states; and the numerous injuries we have suffered alternately from both parties amply prove how essential it is to our interests to have other friends than either. In every naval war it must be the interest of Britain and of France to draw or to force us into it as parties, while it must always be our unequivocal interest to remain neutral. In the present war I am confident we have suffered more for want of a free intercourse, communication and concert, with the neutral states in Europe, than would discharge five times the expense of maintaining ministers with them, and if we should finally be forced out of the system which the government has had so much at heart and compelled to engage in hostilities for our own defence, it may be in some measure attributed to the neglect of a good understanding with the nations which have had an interest similar to ours, that is a neutral interest. . . .

Some of the newspapers have intimated that Mr. Morris

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(Gouverneur) was charged by the British Ministry with such a negotiation here, and Prince Ferdinand (brother of the Great Frederick) assured me that it was so, adding that it was thought a very strange proposal for *an American* to make.[1] Baron Alvensleben the first time that I saw him asked me several questions about Mr. Morris, who he aid had given much dissatisfaction here. I told him that Morris had long ceased to be in any sort of employ under the American government, and hinted that I had seen a newspaper paragraph pretending that he was now in the English service, of which however I was altogether ignorant. "Pour vous parler franchement" (said he) "je crois que c'est un volontaire en politique, qui ne tient ses pourvoirs que de lui même." From the two anecdotes I conclude either that the British government did employ Morris and afterwards disavowed him, or that he pretended to have authority from them, when in truth he had none. This at least is certain, that he has made himself very obnoxious both here and at Vienna, where he received an express order to quit the Austrian territory. The same *intimation* was given him at Berlin, though not in so formal a manner. His conduct has nowhere been such as to do honor or credit to his country, if it may be judged by its effects. He is yet wandering about at some of the small German Courts, and had left Hamburg but a short time before I came through it in October.[2]

. . . . . .

I remain &c.

[1] *Diary and Letters of Gouverneur Morris*, II. 170, *et seq.*; *Hist. Mss. Commission*, Fortesque Mss., I–III.

[2] Morris was at this time at Ratisbon.

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 5 February, 1798.

. . . . . .

I am very glad that I was not sent to France,[1] for there is so much *personal* malignity among the men in power in that country against my father, that they would have felt a special satisfaction in treating me with more than common indignity, and in defeating every attempt by me for a reconciliation between the two governments. Since the 4th of September all hopes of justice from France must vanish until some further revolution; and although I think those gentlemen, who have submitted to every sort of contumely and ill treatment for the sake of preserving peace, deserve as highly of their country as if their negotiation had been successful, I am pleased that no part of their failure can be imputed to the appointment of a person in any degree obnoxious to the ruling persons in France.

Of the *personal* malignity which I have above noticed, there has been for years past incessant proofs many of which I have heretofore noticed; it continues still indefatigable. You will have the plainest evidence of the arts used by the Directory and their creatures, to give the color of a personal quarrel to the differences between the governments. They do not only make personal complaints against the

[1] "It has given me real pain to find that the change in your embassy does not meet your ready assent; or that it should be personally so inconvenient to you as you represent. I cannot but flatter myself you will find it more agreeable than you anticipate. Your father has written you so fully upon the subject, and in my mind obviated every objection, that I think you will feel more satisfied. That you would not have been sent to Berlin at this time, if Mr. Washington had continued in office, I fully believe. But I can tell you where you would have been employed — as one of the envoys to France. This was the desire and opinion of all the ministers, and nothing but your near connection with the chief Magistrate prevented your being nominated. He had a delicacy upon the subject, and declined it." *Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams*, November 3, 1797. Ms.

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President, but they have made their creatures in Holland (creatures which since then they have without ceremony kicked out of doors themselves,) complain against me simply because they bear a personal malice against him, and of course against anyone connected with him. "Principles and not men," is their motto, (it used to be that of our last Minister in France, until from some secret stings of conscience or other cause he changed it to that of "Dread God,") by which they mean that no sentiment of honor, truth, justice, or generosity is to be admitted to protect the feelings, or character, or reputation, or person, or property, of any man whose principles happen to differ from theirs. Consequently they are in their animosities the most personal and malicious of mankind. They always affect even to attack particular persons, as the French have done in all their declarations of war, and as all their writers and most of their partisans have invariably done ever since, by fixing upon individual men upon whom to pour the perpetual torrent of their invective. The consequence of this system is, by unavoidable necessity, a state of inextinguishable war between man and man, as long as there exist two human beings together; for no sooner has one set of persons been swept away by the pestilence of these doctrines, than their destroyers immediately divide against each other, with the same system of destroying men to establish principles.

The French government have at length crowned the measure of their injustice and violence towards neutral nations, by a decree declaring *all* goods of British produce to be the worst sort of contraband. They have not yet declared war against us, but by this measure they will do us all the mischief that they could by a state of open war. In my opinion the United States have long enough tried "a tame beseeching of rejected peace." It does not appear to me nec-

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essary to declare or even to make war against France, but I most sincerely hope our commerce will be allowed to arm in its own defence. I am not prepared for unresisting submission to robbery, even though all the rest of the world should be.

. . . . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BERLIN, February 17, 1798.

. . . . . .

There is no doubt but that the French are indefatigably working to raise an insurrection at Hamburg against the present government.[1] Among the means they are using for the purpose I shall particularly notice at present only the establishment of a *theo-philanthropical* society here. Perhaps you know what the *theo-philanthropists* are better than I do. It is a theological and political mixture of deism, morality, anti-christianity, and revolution, that their doctrine preaches. It is under the special encouragement and protection of the French Directory. Larevellière-Lépaux is one of its founders.[2] Larevellière is a professed and bitter

[1] The Directory sent as the agent for this purpose, Louis-Jean-Joseph Bourbon de la Crosnière.

[2] "Owing to the fact that Larevellière-Lépeaux was its patron if not its apostle, the curious creed and worship of the Theo-philanthropists obtained a momentary notoriety during the Directory. This was a form of natural religion founded by David Williams, an English Deist, in 1766, which failed in England, but found in France a certain number of eminent disciples, such as Bernardin de Saint-Pierre, Marie-Joseph Chénier, Creuzé-Latouche, David the painter, and Dupont of Nemours. Its tenets consisted of elegant extracts from the teaching of the English Deists, and from Zoroaster, Socrates, Seneca, Fénelon, Voltaire, and above all Rousseau. Its ritual, celebrated on the *décadi*, was composed of an invocation to the God of Nature, an examination of conscience, hymns, sermons, and readings from the sages named above, together with special services for baptisms, marriages, and funerals. The Directors appropriated eighteen churches in Paris to its use;

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enemy of *Christianity*, against which he has read a long and tedious dissertation to the National Institute. I shall further remark here that the Paris prints have lately asserted that *Dupont de Nemours*[1] is going to America, with the intention of setting up there a *theo-philanthropical* society, and that he has been to the Society at Paris to request of them a copy of the books containing their doctrines and constitution. Dupont de Nemours you remember was one of the unfortunate members of the Legislative Assembly upon whom the Fructidorian revolution fell. He was not, however, like the others condemned to transportation, or even expelled; he was suffered to resign his seat, and by yielding to the torrent escaped its most destructive fury. He is the man who, while a member of the Legislature, was so anxious to have France pursue a system of conciliation towards the Americans, so as to induce them to choose for their President a man *devoted to France*. If Dupont is going to America with the design mentioned above, he has made his peace with the Directory, and will be a diligent servant to them on the other side of the Atlantic.

The Danish and Prussian ministers at Paris are ordered to make united remonstrances against the late law, so contrary to the rights of neutral navigation; perhaps the effect of them may be to procure exemptions in favor of these two powers; but if not, they will make the best of it; they cannot go to war for that. Let me remark to you that this is the universal and final argument of all Europe in submitting to the unceasing insults and injuries they receive. We cannot go to war for that. All, it cannot be denied, bow before the

but, as soon as the novelty wore off, it dwindled to a handful of supporters who were finally excluded from the 'national edifices' in 1801." *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII. 501.

[1] Pierre Samuel Du Pont de Nemours (1739–1817).

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power of France, while all have at heart the most utter detestation of the conduct she pursues. Sweden after all the indignity she has suffered finally appoints again the Baron de Staël, and it is only questionable whether the Directory will condescend to receive him. This reappointment of the Baron de Staël, after the choice of Count Fersen as the Swedish Minister at the Congress of Rastadt,[1] indicated a vacillating political system at Stockholm. The French papers are full of the King's discontent with his late marriage,[2] his ill humor, &c., and intimate that Sweden is afraid France will give the King's domain in Pomerania to Prussia. That neither insults nor injuries can break off the courtship of Sweden to France is now apparent. The endeavors for bringing about a reconciliation between France and Russia are renewed. Russia still hangs back a little but may come to terms. The soul of Catherine is no longer there.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 116 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 19 February, 1798.

SIR:

I mentioned in my last letter my intention of calling soon upon the Minister Count Haugwitz for the purpose of conversing with him upon the subject of the late *French decree against neutral navigation.*[3] I have accordingly been with him this afternoon and take the first moment after my return to give you the substance of the conversation. He said

[1] Hans Axel von Fersen (1755–1810). The French authorities objected to his having a place in the Congress of Rastadt.

[2] Gustavus IV (1778–1837), who had married, October 31, 1797, Frederica Dorothea, daughter of Charles Frederick, grand duke of Baden.

[3] Italics represent what was in cipher.

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that he could not *conceive the motives upon which this decree was founded, as its inevitable operation must be advantageous to England alone. That orders have been given to the Minister of this Court at Paris to make the most serious representations against it, that to these no answer has yet been given, but as soon as it should come he would let me know and have some further conversation with me upon the subject.*

That if, however, the French government should persist in it, he could think of only three alternatives upon which the neutral powers could determine: either tamely to submit and receive the law from France by the sacrifice of their most unquestionable commercial rights, which he hoped they would not do;[1] *or to throw themselves into the arms of England; or to concert between themselves a system of measures grounded upon their common interests, which would enable them to assert their rights in a tone to make them be respected both by France and England. That this last appeared to him to be the most expedient.*

I told him that although the decree cannot yet be known in the United States, I was sure it would be viewed there in the same light as it appears to him. That it is impossible the United States should acquiesce in a measure so hostile to their rights, and so ruinous as it must prove to their commerce, and that I am fully persuaded the American government would prefer concerting measures of defence against this attack upon the common rights of nations, rather than either of the other alternatives *which he had mentioned.*

The Count expressed himself in terms of the highest respect and esteem of the government of the United States, and said that their conduct had uniformly and invariably discovered such a regard for the rights of other nations and such a firm and impartial neutrality towards the belligerent

[1] These seven words were underlined in the Ms.

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powers, as gave them a fair and honorable claim to universal approbation and applause.[1]

I have the honor &c.

[1] "Your conversation *with the Prussian minister*, as detailed in your letter of the 19th of February, is very interesting. The third of the alternatives mentioned *by him, to maintain the dignity of the rights of neutral commerce*, would, as you assured him, be most agreeable to the United States *in reference to France*. Both the others we should certainly reject. *But at present how is the small maritime force of the northern neutral powers of Europe*, with or without *the inconsiderable armed ships of the United States, to control the British marine?* The *arming by Sweden and Denmark* for this purpose *in 1794 we know was perfectly futile*. And in the existing state of things it would be highly impolitic *to embarrass Great Britain by any maritime combination*. For however much reason *the neutral nations have to complain of her measures, the little finger of France in maritime depredations is thicker than the loins of Britain, and the safety of the portion of the civilized world not yet subjugated by France* greatly depends *on the barrier opposed to her boundless ambition and rapacity by the navy of England*. If this *navy were crushed or subjected to the power of France she would* instantly *become the tyrant of the seas, as she is already of the European continent*. At present *her rapacity is confined by the inferiority of her naval force which therefore exerts itself* chiefly *in acts of piracy on neutral commerce*. But were *the English navy subdued, France would insultingly prescribe law to the whole maritime* world. If *British cruisers commit aggressions*, there is a well-founded expectation *of redress, at least, in the supreme courts; but those of France*, from the lowest to the highest, *are generally corrupt and prompt to establish violence* in the forms *of law*, and where *the judges felt any compunction* (a most rare occurrence) *the terror of the government enforces the execution of its iniquitous decrees*. I refer to *their practice in France*. In *their consular courts in Spain, and their West Indian tribunals*, it is, if possible, still worse. Yet *from the decisions of the consuls in Spain, although a number of appeals* have been made *to the courts in France*, I do not recollect a single instance that has proved successful. In *the West Indies nobody* thinks *of entering an appeal*.

"If there were to be *a combination of the neutral powers to protect their commerce, it is against France that their force should be directed*. But this is scarcely to be hoped for in respect to *any of the powers to whose territories her armies can march, until her monstrous tyranny becoming still more insupportable at home as well as abroad, all Europe shall rise to overturn the execrable government that wields her immense force*." *From the Secretary of State*, May 26, 1798. Ms. (Cipher in italics.)

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TO ELBRIDGE GERRY

BERLIN, 20 February, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I have felt, as every true American must feel, very keenly, the situation and the treatment which you and your respectable colleagues have experienced since your arrival in France, and I regret most forcibly and cordially with you the little prospect of a successful termination to your mission. A war with France must be one of the most unfortunate events that can befall our country. All the consequences which you mention must be expected from it, and perhaps others yet more distressing. At the same time we must remember, there is a point beyond which every sacrifice to preserve peace only serves to defeat its own purpose, and that perfidy or dishonor are too high a price to pay even for the first of national blessings.

That the system of rejecting reconcilement upon any practicable terms is formed upon a mistaken view of the interests of France I have no doubt. That it must lead us to a close alliance with England is obvious enough, and if it has not already produced this effect it has not been owing to the want of opportunity or offers for the purpose.[1]

A few days after the date of your letter the new decree against all neutral navigation and commerce took place. The tendency of it is to force the neutral nations into a system conformable to the views of Great Britain, and to secure to the English navigation advantages over that of all others. The reporter of this extraordinary decree to the Council of Five Hundred asserted that the English have no merchant vessels employed at all at present. It is well known they

[1] See *Pickering to Rufus King*, April 2, 1798, in *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 296.

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have upwards of twenty thousand; yet upon such a declaration the report was adopted *without discussion*. It is certainly extremely offensive to the commercial neutral powers of Europe. How pernicious it is to us, I need not say.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 22 February, 1798.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

. . . . . .

I have some curiosity to see Mr. Monroe's book,[1] and also that of Fauchet. These men were very confidential from the beginning, as appears by Fauchet's intercepted letter. Monroe was one of Fauchet's virtuous Republicans, who even before he went to France betrayed to him as many secrets as he could. Fauchet expressly designates him as "a patriot of whom he delights to entertain an idea worthy of that IMPOSING title."[2] An imposing title, indeed, if conduct is the proper test of patriotism. I hope, however, that some notice will be taken of these books, which I dare say will furnish materials for the refutation of their authors. I think there has not been that advantage taken of Randolph's pamphlet, which it was susceptible of. In this respect Porcupine's observations,[3] as far as they went, were very well. But Porcupine is professedly an Englishman, and our

[1] *A View of the Conduct of the Executive in the Foreign Affairs of the United States.* It was published late in December, 1797.

[2] "Il y a encore des Patriotes dont j'aime à avoir une idée digne de ce titre imposant. Consulte Monroe, il est de ce nombre; il m'avait prévenue sur les hommes que le courant des événemens a entrainés comme des corps dénués de substance." *Fauchet to the Commissioner of Foreign Relations*, October 31, 1794. *Correspondence of French Ministers* (Turner), 451.

[3] William Cobbett, *New Year's Gift to the Democrats*; *or Observations on 'A vindication of Randolph's Resignation,'* 1796.

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own friends of the government should not have left the exposure of Randolph and his party altogether to him. I have in a former letter to my father mentioned one observation that occurred to me as particularly striking, and which is not noticed by Porcupine. It is that the *falsehood* of Fauchet's certificates to Randolph, with regard to the essential point upon which Randolph's guilt depends, is completely demonstrated by the internal evidence of a passage in the intercepted letter. This fact appears to me of some consequence, for if it appears beyond a contradiction that Fauchet solemnly certified a falsehood for the purpose of washing Randolph white, what credit can be given to anything that he may afterwards publish to sully the fair splendor of Washington's fame? If I were in America, with my books at hand and a little leisure at my command, these things should be properly unfolded to the public notice.

I have seen the *other* pamphlet to which you allude.[1] The solicitude to escape from a charge of speculation has compelled a reluctant disclosure of a different sort of error. It might be unnecessary. But we must remark the extreme industry with which Monroe labored to foster and preserve a malversation which at the same time he dared not avow. His correspondence upon this subject amounts to this. "I do not believe you guilty, but I wish the world to think you so; I cannot accuse you, but I will not disculpate you." He used his benefactor the late President, no better. For he fed and boarded Tom Paine to abuse him in the most false and scurrilous manner, and made Tom at the same time certify that he had checked his malicious effusions. Monroe justly says that speculation in our funds would have been criminal in a Secretary of the Treasury, but he does not tell us what he thinks of an American Minister in France

[1] That of Hamilton.

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speculating in assignats and confiscated property. Of the policy or morality of this he could not properly decide. No man is a judge in his own cause.

. . . . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

BERLIN, 25 February, 1798.

. . . . . .

The decree against neutral navigation, it is said, will meet with spirited resistance from the northern powers. The Danish and Prussian ministers at Paris have orders to make joint and very serious remonstrances against it. You will see some particulars of an interesting conversation upon this subject.[1] Would it not be possible to send full powers and proper instructions to concert and conclude upon a general system of maritime neutrality similar to that which took place during the American war? If this decree should be maintained, I am confident that the moment would be peculiarly favorable for such a concert. The proposal intimated in the conversation referred to opens the way to a large and extensive discussion of the means for combining together the scattered strength which might be made to maintain the *neutral interest*, an interest essentially different from that of either belligerent party. The polar star to the system of the Prussian cabinet since its peace with France has been the neutrality of the north of Germany. It was concerted with the other German states within the line of demarcation, and has been strenuously and successfully maintained hitherto. It has been attended by great advantages to the parties concerned, and raised high the consideration of the Prussian power. I believe the present

[1] That given in the letter to the Secretary of State, February 19, 1798.

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King would not be insensible to the honor of extending the benefits of this neutral system, and of declaring himself at the commencement of his reign a protector of neutral commercial rights. Such was the tenor of the conversation of which only the essence was given in the letter which you will have seen before receiving this.

There may be some doubt indeed whether the United States will be suffered to remain a neutral power. Their present situation exposes them already to almost all the evils of war. The Commissioners at Paris have called for a decisive answer, and will in all probability soon return home.[1] There is in one of the last *Rédacteurs* a long speculative essay, calling upon the *emigrants* to go to America and conquer *Canada*, which it says the British government stole from France. It adds that by adopting this expedient they may secure pardon, goodwill, and perhaps assistance from the present French rulers. I am persuaded you will have direct accounts of this curious publication which proves at least there are thoughts of reconquering Canada.

[1] "I am very glad that the Commissioners have determined to bring the event of their mission to some issue. They have been long enough suffering indignities and deprecating hostilities, which accumulate in proportion to the desire which our government and country have manifested to avert them. I hope and am persuaded that after taking their decisive measure, they will not be amused by any attempt to detain them in such a state of humiliation for our government as that in which they have hitherto acquiesced for the sake of peace.

"Their time for calling forth a determination was in my judgment extremely well chosen; for if any consideration of prudence has weight upon the French councils, no moment could be more favorable than this, when their late decrees have given extreme offence to all the neutral powers, and when their various projects in Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Spain, and against Great Britain and Portugal, engross their attention, and require some temporary management of the nations, with whom they are not at professed war." *To William Vans Murray*, February 23, 1798. Ms.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 6 March, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Your favor of 20th and 24th ultimo reached me last evening. They have been too long on the road, the regular term of passage between this and the Hague is not more than seven days.

When I mentioned on a former occasion their American diplomacy, I meant theirs with us, not ours with them. I hope that if we should end by war with France, and the Batavians should be so regardless of their own interest as to side with our enemies, there will be such occasion for you elsewhere in Europe as to render a second voyage so soon unnecessary.

Tallien's motion[1] I had already noticed. I think it should serve as an indication of our proper point of defence. If they take and confiscate everything of British produce, the neutral vessels may as well arm as not, since even if unarmed, they will be treated as enemies. If the laws of nations were not outrageously violated by the piratical decree, then indeed might there be some pretence for Tallien's argument that the neutrals should navigate unarmed upon the faith of that law; but for a highwayman to pretend that a traveller should not carry pistols with him, but rest upon the protection of the municipal laws, has not yet been heard of. These measures combined amount to this, that the terrible republic will not only rob the neutrals without shame, but will not even allow them to defend themselves against her robbery.

I hope Congress will by law authorize merchant vessels *under proper restrictions* to arm and defend themselves, and

[1] Jean-Lambert Tallien (1767–1820).

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give this decree for the motive.[1] At this point it appears to me fit and even necessary, that an avowed and unequivocal resistance to united insult and oppression should commence. Let us keep upon the defensive, and trust to God for the consequences. I mean to say as much in writing home, and if you think with me, shall be obliged to you to give the same idea. The terrible Republic can hurt us little by sea, if we will but resist her, and I am sick, heartily sick, of the servile acquiescence with which we have so long received from her buffetings and indignities, and returned her thanks.

It is very possible the design of Tallien and his party, who brought forward these measures, that they *should* produce a war. If it is, no tameness, no obsequiousness, no submission, will preserve us from it; if it is not, then it becomes indispensable for us to prove that we will not, without a struggle, abandon our most unquestionable commercial rights to the violent injustice of any nation.

Though I have no better opinion than yourself of the influence of *reason* in any European political discussion, I feel a great satisfaction and confidence in the circumstance that our commissioners are powerful reasoners; it will as you say

[1] "Under these circumstances I cannot forbear to reiterate the recommendations which have been formerly made, and to exhort you to adopt, with promptitude, decision, and unanimity, such measures as the ample resources of the country afford, for the protection of our seafaring and commercial citizens; for the defence of any exposed portions of our territory; for replenishing our arsenals, establishing foundries, and military manufactures; and to provide such efficient revenue as will be necessary to defray extraordinary expenses, and supply the deficiencies which may be occasioned by depredations on our commerce.

"The present state of things is so essentially different from that in which instructions were given to the collectors to restrain vessels of the United States from sailing in an armed condition, that the principle on which those orders were issued has ceased to exist. I therefore deem it proper to inform Congress that I no longer conceive myself justifiable in continuing them, unless in particular cases, where there may be reasonable ground of suspicion, that such vessels are intended to be employed contrary to law." *Message of John Adams to Congress*, March 19, 1798.

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have a great effect in our country, and what is yet of more importance, it will be a strong hold to prove the justice of our cause in future times.[1] For my own part I hold the *right* as so much more important and essential in any contest than the issue, that I heartily join in the sentiment of Lucan, and prefer the decision of Cato to that of the gods.

There is yet no answer to the remonstrances against the anti-neutral decree, made conjointly by the Danish and Prussian Ministers at Paris. . . .

Ever truly yours.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 118 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 8 March, 1798.

. . . . . .

The French government have not been content with the late decree for confiscating every neutral vessel and cargo, any part of which should consist of goods the produce of the British dominions. A motion of Tallien in the Council of Five Hundred which will probably soon be passed into a law, declares that every merchant vessel under a neutral flag that shall be found *armed*, shall from that fact alone be deemed an enemy, and with its cargo be condemned as lawful prize; and for the purpose of carrying the measure into more effectual execution, he proposes the establishment

[1] "I have not seen much of General P[inckney]'s or G[erry]'s, or Marshall's writing, but I consider Marshall, whom I have heard speak on a great subject, as one of the most powerful reasoners I ever met with in public or in print. Reasoning in such cases will have a fine effect in America; but to depend upon it in Europe is really to place Quixote with Genes de Passamente and among the men of the world whom he reasoned with so sublimely on their way to the gallies. They answer him, you know, with stones and blows, though the knight is an *armed*, as well as an eloquent knight." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, February 20, 1798. Ms.

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of a special tribunal different from the ordinary Courts of Admiralty, and subject to the instructions of the Directory. In the speech which Tallien made upon bringing forth this proposal he states, that by the customary law of nations neutral vessels have no right to go armed as if they were at war, but are always bound to navigate upon the faith of the laws of nations. *This maxim I take to be correct; but if a belligerent power in violation of the most unequivocal rights of neutral commerce avows the purpose of capturing and confiscating neutral property, in every instance of merchandise originally the produce of her antagonist, the neutral governments not only acquire the right, but, as it appears to me, are bound in duty to their own citizens, to permit the arming of their vessels for the purposes of self defence.*[1]

The whole speech of Tallien upon this occasion deserves particular attention, but I presume you will receive it from a more direct source. I shall only observe further, that one of the professed motives upon which he founds his proposition is to encourage the ardor of the Republican privateers by extending the field of their plunder. He says, that numerous as they have been, they have met but very indifferent success in the *number* of their prizes. The reasons of this are obvious, because the British have had the complete mastery of the seas, and have always protected their immensely numerous merchant vessels by strong convoys. As the privateers, therefore, cannot prey upon the enemies of France, this measure and the preceding decree are adopted to let them loose upon neutral commerce, because it is defenceless and the object is to keep it so.

It may be also remarked that Sonthonnax is upon the committee appointed on this motion of Tallien to report upon it, and, it is not improbable, that the idea of the motion itself origin-

[1] In cipher.

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ated with him. The pains which are so early taken to prevent the arming of neutral vessels sufficiently indicate what is considered as their best security, and I cannot forbear expressing my hopes that our fellow-citizens will be authorized by law to arm their merchant vessels, but under such regulations and restrictions as shall best answer to keep them within the limits of a just defence, and check the natural tendency of such an authority to offensive hostilities.

There is yet no answer received here to the remonstrances which have been made by the northern powers against the decree for the annihilation of neutral commerce, but I have seen an anonymous speculation in one of the last Rédacteurs *which, if it may be considered as emanating from an official source, proves that there is no disposition to recede from that regulation. It attributes the opposition of the neutral powers to the intrigues of the British government, threatens them with the open enmity of France, if they should persist in their resistance; affirms that the decree is calculated to promote the neutral interests and the liberty of the seas, and concludes by menacing the northern powers with rebellion by their own subjects. I know not how far they may be intimidated by arguments of this kind. Endeavors have been made to operate a conciliatory system between the cabinets of Vienna, Petersburg, and Berlin, for arresting the progress of a domineering influence which is alike dangerous to them all. These attempts, however, it is apprehended will not be successful. There is a mutual want of confidence that frustrates every design of coöperation, though there is beyond all doubt a similarity of sentiment prevailing at the three courts as to the common danger, and upon a most important point, the common interest. I have intimations that the suspicions and jealousies of the two imperial courts fasten chiefly upon the minister with whom I lately conversed,*[1] *and who is held to be par-*

[1] Haugwitz.

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tially favorable to the views of France. His conversation with me did not discover such a temper, but there was no witness present and nothing has passed between us in writing. . . .

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

20 March, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Last evening I received your favor of the 12th instant, which I have read with great attention, and which opens undoubtedly a boundless field for speculation. Your idea of 15 January, upon which you have been kind enough to enlarge, is grand and comprehensive; at the same time I doubt whether it will be possible to make any advantageous use of it for the present. If any occasion should present here, I will not let it perish upon my hands. The disposition to oppose is good, but the power is small.[1]

[1] "The French Directory mean to extend their fingers to every vessel that they can touch, and to plunder her and her cargo. If you have not seen the message of the 4th instant, you will not comprehend the full extent of their piratical mode of liberating the seas. They recommend a law which shall decide the character of all vessels met at sea, as to their state of neutral or enemy, not by their flag or the ownership of the cargo, but by the single fact, if the whole or any part of the cargo be of the fabric of England or her possessions! And that no vessel, unless in storms, enter the port of the Republic, if she have touched at an English port in her voyage!

"How the northern powers will act, you know better than I do. It would be possible, *if they mean to resist*, to hold up a project which would be attractive and feasible, if they are in earnest; and should the United States be driven into the war. our strength is in the use we *may* make of South America and the W. I. Islands, In any coöperation with an European strong marine, these I consider within our power, and these are the handles of the commerce and marine of Europe. Were there a hearty marine coöperation, backed by a German (north) military force for the frontier of France, between the forces of America, Great Britain, Sweden and Denmark, it would be possible to give the northern powers a larger participation in the West Indian possessions. Since the discovery of Amercia there never has been such an opportunity of altering the commercial relations of Europe. In such a project, America is the pivot. Success on our side without this would

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I told you in my last that unsuccessful recent endeavors have been made to combine *Austria*, *Russia* and *Prussia*.[1] Until some material change at one or the other of them, I understand no sort of confidence or coöperation is to be expected between the three, but mutual jealousy and suspicion readier to blaze out into hostilities against each other than against the common enemy.

All are expecting the event of the great expedition. If that fails, we shall have numerous and great resources. The decree will in that case soon be repealed. To maintain it effectually will be impossible. We shall have a long respite at least, and perhaps even be courted back to friendship. If it succeeds you have pronounced the doom of Europe and of all commerce, and I hold your sentence irrevocable. If it be a drawn game between *France* and *Great Britain*, all the dangers now impending will continue to threaten until the rivals begin again. The battle between them must be for life or death. Both cannot live together, and both know full well this to be the truth. *Spain* and *Portugal* you say will certainly fall, of which I have with you very little doubt. But it is not to me so clear that their colonies will necessarily fall with them. If they should for a time, *France* cannot possibly keep them long. She can do nothing with colonies. Nothing can be more anti-colonial than her whole system at this day — no slaves, no commerce, no property. She

aggrandise Great Britain too much for us; with this, success would produce a new maritime balance which we want. Prussia might also enlarge her base of commerce, and she has made a good use of her small means and would eagerly enlarge them. Unfortunately for us, our real strength, both from internal means and from our local position, is not known to the continental powers *at all*! Were they studiously developed, we must appear in a degree the arbiter of the sources of European marine strength, and a desirable ally to any power (other things coöperating) that finds itself under a necessity of undermining an enemy, or of enlarging its own base." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, January 15, 1798. Ms.

[1] In cipher.

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may very easily conquer colonies, but how can she possibly keep them? Turgot, one of the fathers of the Revolution, saw this so clearly more than twenty years ago, that he wrote a long memorial to prove that *all* the powers of Europe must lose their colonies, and the sooner they reconciled themselves to it the better. Upon this view of things speculation may be founded with some degree of certainty.

The colonies of *France* are already ruined, I believe irretrievably so; that is, they are possessed by a mere banditti, who can subsist themselves only by plunder; they can never furnish the great storehouses of commerce and navigation to the parent country again. They can never even make the *West Indies* themselves flourish with culture. Those of *Great Britain* must fall, were it only by catching the contagion; in that case no other power can retain any colonies. What the consequences of an universal dissolution of the connections between Europe and the other quarters of the world in this respect will be, I have not imagination to conjecture, but the event itself approaches rapidly. . . .

It is of little consequence how long the *forms* of Republicanism and the name of representative democracy may be retained, the real power must essentially remain in the *armed force*.

This being once established as a given point from whence to trace a course of argument, the reflections which it suggests with respect to the necessary influence of this system upon *our country* are important. I cannot enter into the detail of them here, but in the progress from one proposition to another, I can see no conclusion for us other than one of these; either to receive constitutions, armies, and fraternity, at the usual price and submit like the rest to the will of *France*; or at least to engraft a *military spirit* upon our national character and become *a warlike people*. This

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result is in either case not pleasant in prospect, but can we help it? If this last must be done we need not offer *the West Indies* to any one. We can take care of them ourselves. They, and the *heirlooms* of *Spain* and *Portugal* would furnish us ample *means* to excite and to feed the martial spirit, which is supposed above to be necessary. But you have enough of this *castle building in Spain*. . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 11 April, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I am glad to find by your favor of the 3rd instant that our friends at Paris have determined to return immediately.[1] They can do nothing, and surely no further time is needed to ascertain this fact. The distinction and preference given to one of the Commissioners is in the same spirit and principle of dividing, which is everywhere and invariably pursued.

I hope this state of things will induce our government to take some effective measures of defence. The *French* are not now at least, and certainly will not be for some time, ready to *come to us*; they can do nothing but infest our trade, which with the protection that a very little exertion will insure to it, will be much safer than it has been the last eighteen months.

The greatest difficulty will arise from the circumstance that our *anti's* do not wish to have our trade protected, and will strain every nerve to leave it altogether defenceless as it has been hitherto. A naval establishment they fear will strengthen the Executive, an object of great terror to them. With the present house I know not how they will get over

[1] See *Rufus King to William Vans Murray*, March 31, 1798. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 294.

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this. If they can, the utmost malice of *France* will do us much more good than harm.

I see by the late French papers that a motion was made in the House of Representatives towards the last of January, and very strenuously debated to provide for no ministers abroad except at Paris and London.[1] This is, and always has been, the policy both of the English and French influence among us. It is a point upon which the rivals concur, because they would gladly have us to bandy about exclusively between themselves. I know not what the decision was, and if your advices inform you, I shall be obliged to you for the intelligence.

So it seems General P[inckney] turned *France's* elections last year upon Royalists, and this year upon Anarchists.[2] What a scarcity of materials in the hands of calumny. I rather think that Dupont de N[emours] was playing the eavesdropper, or trying to pick up some opinion of the Generals which he might carry to *France* as a propitiative for himself.

[1] *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress, 850 *et seq.* The Berlin legation came in for much criticism.

[2] "General Pinckney tells me that they have had an *answer* to their long memorial of 31 January, 'weak in argument, but irritating and insulting in its style;' and that the Directoire (or Mr. T.) say that though the United States have not shown in the choice of their envoys as amicable a disposition as they did in the appointment of a minister to Great Britain, yet they will treat with *one* of the envoys whose presumed disposition promises the most confidence in the French government!!!! This *one* is your old neighbor. General Pinckney says they *unanimously* agree not to accede to (so impertinent) an offer of this sort. Dupont de Nemours came in afterwards and said, the Directoire, he believed, meant to send away Pinckney and Marshall, but there would be no rupture, because they meant to keep Gerry!!! That they accused General Pinckney of having exerted himself last year in getting the Royalists elected, and that this year he had but too successfully done the same in favor of the Anarchists as electors, with the choice of whom the Directoire are much enraged. The General speaks of it as a calumny, as if any man believes it. So I suppose will end this negotiation." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, April 3, 1798. Ms.

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They are enraged at the choice of Anarchists. But how could it be otherwise when they had taken care to exclude every man of sense and principle, under the pretence of royalism? The Directory begin already to complain of the primary assemblies, and have made a proclamation declaring that the Fructidorian energy is as good and will be as useful against Anarchy as against Royalism. Thus a precedent of this kind becomes an apology for perpetual deviations. *France* swears that there is but one good government upon earth, viz. a representative democracy; yet *France* swears that as often as her people choose, they invariably give their suffrage to the greatest scoundrels among them. The Frenchman was plausible who said that the whole system of Revolution was comprised in these words, "Get out of your place and let me get in it."

The French Minister at Copenhagen has declared officially that the Danish flag would be treated by the French armed vessels as *heretofore*. Perhaps the same assurance has been given here. So that the new decree is not to be enforced *against them*. I have expected this and suppose it will produce its effect. . . .

TO JOHN ADAMS

15 April, 1798.

I have no late letters from America. The most recent accounts relative to public affairs are in the French newspapers, which give an extract of a debate in the House of Representatives of the United States, on a motion to refuse appropriations for keeping any ministers abroad excepting at Paris and London. The same French papers do not fail to insert the declamation, equally ingenious in argument

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and new in form, which a certain patriotic member, whose patriotism is said to have begun by a fraudulent bankruptcy, indulged himself in against the President. The tools of the French Directory take from this circumstance occasion to say throughout Europe, that the party in the United States against the President pronounces itself more strongly from day to day, and they add that there have been violent commotions in the states of New York and of Vermont against the authority of the Union.

The Commissioners at Paris are doubtless before this upon their return home.[1] Their negotiation has issued as there has been every reason since the 4th of September[2] to expect it would. This issue was clearly seen at that time by every American of common sense and understanding in Europe. It was announced by me before the close of that same month of September, in a letter, in my own opinion important by its contents, but of which I am still ignorant whether it has ever been received. The system of dividing to conquer is pursued as usual by the Directory, and amidst all the proofs of malevolence, of perfidy, and of overbearing insolence, which their whole conduct towards the United States exhibits, they have at length intimated a disposition to negotiate with *one* of the three Commissioners, whose dispositions they consider as more entitled than those of the others to *their* confidence. That *one* is your particular friend and acquaintance; the special object of *your* choice, against whom even the warmest promoters of the American cause objected at the time of his appointment. I have too high an opinion of his honor and integrity to believe that he purchased by any improper indications of a temper to acquiesce

[1] Marshall and Pinckney left Paris April 16.

[2] The *coup d'état* of 18 Fructidor. See letter of September 21, 1797.

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in anything dishonorable to his country a preference which I hope he did not deserve.[1]

[1] "My very great respect for the understandings and character of our envoys compels me to believe that their conduct is governed by motives that they consider as perfectly sound and sufficient; but I have some times apprehended that a residence of many months at Paris operates to impair the soundest and firmest minds. The force of sympathy is greater than we are aware of; and I fear very few of our countrymen have been some time in France without having been in some degree infected with the contagion that prevails there. I can safely say, that I think our envoys, or at least *two out of three of them* are as little likely to feel the influence which at Paris reigns over, and subjects the minds of men to the will of the Great Nation, as any of our countrymen." *Rufus King to John Quincy Adams*, London, March 26, 1798. Ms.

In his first moment of disappointment Pinckney was severe upon his colleague. "I have made great sacrifice of my feelings to preserve union, but in vain. I never met with a man of less candor and so much duplicity as Mr. Gerry. General Marshall is a man of extensive ability, of manly candor and an honest heart." *Charles C. Pinckney to Rufus King*, Paris, April 4, 1798. Murray was angered even to sickness, and wrote to Adams a denunciation of Gerry's conduct, concluding with these words: "Though I know that he is a very well informed one upon Congress business, and of a most friendly turn of heart, good husband, father and neighbor, yet I know him so well as to say that of all men I know in America he is perhaps the least qualified to play a part in Paris, either among the men or the women. He is too virtuous for the last, too little acquainted with the world and with himself for the first, and could do no possible good but in a relative character as one of three envoys." *To John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, April 13, 1798. Ms. And later, June 8, on Gerry's inexplicable conduct in remaining, Murray wrote: "I do fear a little that man's more than infantine weakness. Of it you can not have an idea, unless you had seen him here or at Paris. Erase all the two lines above. It is true, but it is cruel. If they get hold of him they will convert him into an innocent-baby-engine against the government, and to his utter ruin."

"In all probability before this letter shall reach you the Commissioners of the United States to France will be returned from a mission which could not succeed. A valuable object is often lost by too apparent an eagerness to secure it. The French government are convinced that there is no sacrifice which that of the United States would refuse to gain their favor, and are probably for that reason determined upon no condition to grant it. The example of all Europe is before us. All Europe proclaims more loudly than in words that if the resentment of France is injurious, her friendship and fraternity in her present conditions are utter ruin and destruction." *To the Secretary of State*, April 12, 1798. Ms.

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. . . . . .

The government of the United States have authorized their consuls abroad to wear a particular uniform. It would be a convenience to give a similar authority to their diplomatic agents. It would save them much useless expense, which they can very ill afford, and enable them to appear without censure in a manner more conformable to republican simplicity, than in the court dresses which they are now obliged to use. It is practised by almost all other nations, and is specially prescribed by the French. Their diplomatic varies from the military uniform. It has no facings to the coat; instead of which they wear a three-colored scarf and a feather in the hat. The American government might direct the use of an uniform more simple and differing only by an appropriate color from a common daily dress. The substitution of common broadcloth instead of silks and velvets, and lace embroidery, and all the finery of children, which a necessary attendance at courts requires, would I presume be agreeable to every American who now undergoes these metamorphoses, and an appropriate dress would have the advantage of designating a character which should not be confounded with every tribe of courtly butterflies in Europe.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

19 April, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I am very sorry to find my neighbor[1] will stay without his colleagues. With you, I can see nothing but mischief to proceed from such a measure. It is utterly impossible that he should obtain any arrangement without degrading and

[1] Gerry.

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disgracing our country. If he acceded to such a one, it will only foment and increase the divisions upon which the reliance of *France* is altogether rested. If he fails, he condemns himself for remaining alone. I am afraid, besides, that he is fundamentally wrong in his opinions of their dispositions. He thinks them misinformed and angry, but not deeply designing and perfidious against us. By separating from the other commissioners he has thrown himself into the hands of the Directory, and must take their will as the basis of all negotiation. I cannot even conjecture the motives for his receding from his first determination to reject the insidious proposal. I can scarcely imagine *any* that would justify it.

I am not at all surprised that the *grey* livery is not yet abandoned by the gentleman[1] who loves it so well. My dear sir, it will be his color all the days of his life, and if he ever is forced to vary from it, I fear he will incline rather to the black than the white. It is the case of almost all such people, when they must choose they generally choose wrong. What can you hope from a man who says that "all the civil discords and wars among mankind have been contests between debtor and creditor, that he thinks every dissension of this kind ought to be stopped at its source, by such an organization of society, that *all contracts should be left upon the footing of private honor and honesty*, and the government and laws never be allowed to interfere to compel their performances." I have heard him give this as his decided opinion. Remember that when he said it he was over the ears in debt, as I presume he is yet. When a man speculates thus in theory, and has such strong inducements to the same system in practise, do you think he will ever exhibit the complexion of political innocence?

[1] Hichborn?

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As to the point in question, it appears to me that those who are for maintaining ministers only at Paris and London are for delivering us up to be bandied exclusively between France and Britain; and those who imagine that by having no ministers in Europe we should have less connection there, pay little attention to the example of the Turks. Their principle till very lately has been to keep no ministers in Europe. The consequence has been that no power was so subservient to external influence.

I do believe that it would not be worth the cost to keep a minister plenipotentiary constantly at Berlin; but in Spain, and Portugal, and Holland too, I am without a doubt that the public interest requires it. The discussion is what I have long been expecting, and if it should fail in its object now, I am persuaded that it will be regularly renewed every year until it succeeds, or until the places shall be filled by the party. As it concerns myself I care not how soon the point is carried after the present time, when it would certainly bear very hard upon me.

. . . . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

27 April, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

There is no circumstance that has for many months given me so much anxiety, as that strange and unaccountable abandonment of his colleagues by one of our commissioners, mentioned in yours of the 17th yesterday received. I have expected from the beginning that the object of the mission as aiming at conciliation would fail, but I did not foresee that such a worse than failure would happen, much less did I imagine that such a poor and paltry as well as

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palpable attempt to *divide* would succeed with either of the envoys.

It is a miserable justification for my neighbor to say that he was *scared* into a consent to remain alone and see his colleagues insultingly rejected, and it gives a wretched prognostic of the progress which the negotiation will take to hear him own that he suffered himself to be bullied into acquiescence, thus at the very threshold.[1]

It is no doubt very apparent that *at present* they prefer this mongrel condition between peace and war, in which they plunder us as enemies and we continue defenceless as friends, to a state of direct and open hostility, in which they could injure us very little more, perhaps not so much, and in which we could do some harm to them. The reasons why they wish not now to go to war with us are equally clear, especially since the adventure of Bernadotte at Vienna and his subsequent departure. They have yet many things to settle in Europe (at least) before they can develop their whole system relative to our country, and it is impossible to be more advantageously situated for negotiation than this manœuvre has placed them. 1st. They are now sure of having a man to deal with who dreads a rupture more than dishonor, disgrace, and vile indignity. 2dly. They have ascertained that they can drive him to any terms by threatening a rupture as the alternative. 3rdly. They know they can amuse him and keep him at bay as long as they think

[1] Murray received a letter from Pinckney and gave this summary of a part of it to Adams. "It appears that very decided explanations must have taken place after this between General Pinckney and Mr. Gerry, as he tells me he has explicitly charged him with 'his duplicity' and 'stated to him the evil consequences which it would produce to his country.' Mr. Gerry (he says) as his reason for staying has told them that Mr. Talleyrand officially assured him '*that if* HE (Mr. G.) *did not stay, a rupture would be the immediate consequence.*'" *To John Quincy Adams*, April 17, 1798. Ms.

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proper, and turn him off just when they please. 4thly. They have acquired but too strong reasons to hope that they can make him consent to conditions of settlement which they know will not be ratified at home, but which will serve to foment the divisions upon which they rest their expectations, and to give *them* the appearance of being the injured party.

Such is their vantage ground, while he on our side is in the position of a person already defeated and confessing his defeat, by consenting upon a menace to a measure which he had rejected. He stands as a convicted culprit bound hand and foot with naked back and shivering shoulders, while Mulciber[1] T[alleyrand] stands over him, brandishing the scourge, and forbidding him upon pain of the lash to move either to the right hand or the left. "It is not and it cannot come to good.". . .

[1] Vulcan. "The refusal to deliver your despatches to you is nothing extraordinary. For this and every other indignity we must learn to be patient, until the representatives of our country at home shall have some feeling for its wrongs from that quarter, and some spirit to resent them. But there is a God in heaven, strong as the reasons of the present time against it may seem; and if there is, the day of retribution for these things will come. Our merchant vessels *must* be permitted to arm. If the permission is not soon granted they will take it. They can at worst only be treated as they are. We must consider that there is only one conclusion to be drawn with regard to *France*. She is no more an object of reasoning than an hurricane, a thunderbolt, or an earthquake. Talk of justice to a boiling lava, talk of faith and honor to a pestilence, and you shall sooner meet with success than in urging them as motives to *France*. We must look upon the wickedness of man as we look upon the destructive agents of nature, and we must deal with them in the same manner too. If we do not, we shall soon find they will deal so with us." *To William Vans Murray*, April 30, 1798. Ms. Some of Murray's official despatches were found on a ship, the *Farmer*, brought into Helvoet by a one-gun privateer. In spite of his remonstrances, these papers were held and sent to Paris.

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 4 May, 1798.

. . . . . .

It is probable that before this letter can reach you Mr. Marshall will have returned home. General Pinckney would have done the same but for the illness of his daughter, which has induced him to go to the south of France, where he has a *permission* to remain only one hundred days. Mr. Gerry stays behind *alone!*[1] It would not perhaps become me to give all my sentiments upon this extraordinary measure, as I have not heard from himself upon what grounds he thought it justifiable. Of this, however, I am confident. He will gain nothing for his country by staying. There is not a nation upon earth with which France has chosen to differ, but she has degraded and oppressed in making arrangements of settlement. She has indeed deeply injured her enemies, but she has utterly and irretrievably ruined her friends.

[1] "Mr. Dandridge [Secretary to Rufus King] has just returned from Paris. He says Mr. G[erry] is the most uneasy man alive. He knows nothing of their intentions (and has not even seen the person of a Director), except that they wish to *receive* him, but he refuses, and says he will not stay long. He has written to me in answer to my letter of 15 April, and vindicates his measure on the merit of PREVENTING a RUPTURE, which was officially threatened, if he went. This is his plea — the very reason for an opposite course. He certainly means well, but he has some substantial errors of opinion at bottom, which will forever lead him into hesitation and error of decision. He is in a thick fog of his own conjuration, and now cannot step to right or left.

"By letters from Paris as late as the 6th from an intelligent man intimate with Mr. G[erry], Mr. S[kipwith], and known to many members of government, it seems they wish to prevail on G[erry] to go home, provided he will pledge himself to draw our government into their views; but the writer says, G[erry] will not do so. In fact G[erry]'s character puzzles them. They can make nothing of him. Frightened him they have. The same turn of mind that made him stay now operates against their further views on *him*. The great view will, however, be but too fully attained — a division of opinion." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, May 14, 1798.

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If Mr. G[erry] stays to put his hand to such a treaty as was forced upon the Batavian and Cisalpine Republics, or to subscribe to such terms as the unhappy Swiss have been compelled to submit to, he stays to the unspeakable misfortune of the American union; if it is only to protract an unavoidable rupture, until the *time* shall exactly suit the Directory, and to keep the United States in that state of listless impotence which will soon make them the fable of Europe, they will have little reason to be satisfied with his obsequiousness to their implacable enemies. One thing in my own mind is clear as a midday sun. Under the present rulers of France no settlement of our affairs there, consistent with our national honor and safety, *can* be made. Mr. G[erry] ought long since to have been unequivocally certain of the same thing; and if he was, he is much to blame for such a desertion of his colleagues, and for throwing out such a new apple of discord in the midst of his countrymen, the people of America. The policy of temporizing will not answer with men of such character as those with whom he has to deal. It was tried by Venice, by Genoa, by Geneva, but most especially by the Swiss Republics. They trusted to professions of friendship, and gave up one point of controversy after another, without making adequate preparations for defence, until the enemy was at their very gates. What has been the consequence? They were left only the option of accepting a constitution made for them at Paris simply without alteration or amendment, or of defending their independence by force of arms. They fought but it was too late; their antagonists had palsied all their strength by division, and to complete the conquest had only to butcher some thousands of their people. The victory has been followed by every species of tyranny, of depredation, and oppression. The only free and happy country in Europe

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has been turned into a field of desolation, wretchedness, and slavery, forced to take the mockery of a constitution made for them at Paris, and to hymn the deadly gloom of their servitude as the new dawn of their freedom. After such an example as this, a citizen of a free Republic, who places any sort of dependence upon the generosity or justice of France, must be the veriest dupe on earth, and cannot even claim the privilege of ignorance or stupidity.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 121 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 17 May, 1798.

SIR:

I have the honor to inclose herewith a copy of a letter which I have written to the Baron d'Engeström, the Swedish minister at this Court;[1] he told me last evening that he had forwarded to his government a copy of it, accompanied with such reflections of his own as he thought best calculated to give weight to the observations contained in it.

He said he had also some questions to propose to me on the part of the Swedish government, and requested me to furnish him with a copy of our last treaty with Great Britain, which I promised him accordingly. He intimated that he thought that treaty contained an article inconsistent with our treaty with France, which however he added was not at all his concern, or that of his government; but he added further that there was likewise an article which had in some measure abandoned or sacrificed, the rights of neutrality,

[1] Baron Schultz von Ascheraden died March 23, and was succeeded by Laurent d'Engeström.

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and that was not entirely conformable to our existing treaty with Sweden. I asked him what was the substance of the articles to which he alluded? He said he had only a general idea of them, but that they conferred upon the British *favors* which we granted to no other nation. I told him that a clause in the British treaty expressly reserved in full force all previous treaties contracted by the parties, and that our treaties both with France and Sweden contained articles stipulating the communication to those nations of any favor that should be granted after their conclusion to any other power. That if, therefore, we had granted any favor to the British in the treaty of November, 1794, it was in the power both of France and Sweden to make that favor common to themselves upon the same conditions. To this he made no reply.

Some part of the observation contained in the inclosed letter may be considered as not absolutely comprised within the purview of my instructions, but I have ventured them from the persuasion that they are not contrary to those instructions, that they are objects of great importance and concern to Sweden and of no less to the United States, and that the time is favorable for suggesting them.

For the same reasons I deem it highly inexpedient to propose any alteration in the principle agreed upon in our present treaty, neutralizing enemies property on board of neutral vessels. It is indeed true that this stipulation has not in the course of the present war been observed by France. But she has uniformly professed her attachment to the principle, and attributed her violation of it to the example and previous practice of her enemy. There is certainly a great inconvenience when two maritime states are at war, for a neutral nation to be bound by one principle to one of the parties, and by its opposite to the other; and in such cases

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it is never to be expected that an engagement favorable to the rights of neutrality will be scrupulously observed by either of the warring states. It appears to me, therefore, that the stipulations ought properly to be made contingent, and the contracting parties to a commercial treaty should agree that in all cases, when one of the parties should be at war and the other neutral, the bottom should cover the property, *provided the enemy of the warring power* admitted the same principles and practised upon it in their Courts of Admiralty; but if not, that the rigorous rule of the ordinary law of nations should be observed.[1]

In truth I am fully convinced that there is only one power in Europe averse to the general establishment of the principle favorable to neutrality, a power which does not even disguise the pretension of domineering upon the ocean, and whose naval force is almost equal to that of all the world besides. It must be admitted that so long as she rejects the liberal principle, every agreement of other nations between themselves admitting it, excepting contingently as above stated, must if it have any operation, operate altogether in

[1] "This proposition of yours appeared to me wholly unexceptionable, and having transmitted your letter to the President, he has returned it with his approbation, and a direction that it should be given you as an instruction by which you should be governed in renewing our treaty with Sweden, and consequently in renewing that with Prussia. The United States will then manifest their attachment to the principle, that free ships should make free goods, and at the same time we should secure ourselves against the injuries which would result from our enemy's not adhering to the same principle. But this contingent stipulation must comprehend *all neutral nations*, as well as the contracting party remaining neutral; that is, in case of war between the United States and France, for instance, France must respect the principle, not only in regard to Swedish and Prussian ships, but towards all other nations remaining neutral; for while the vicinity of those two powers to France might enable them to be carriers of her goods, they would afford to us little aid; altho' by making the rule apply to all neutrals, our commerce might in some of their vessels find equal protection with that of France in the vessels of Sweden and Prussia." *From the Secretary of State*, September 24, 1798. Ms.

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her favor and to her advantage. For while it gives her the benefit of a safe and protected neutral conveyance of her goods, it refuses the same to her enemy.

She will not readily agree to it, but she has once been compelled by the united resolution of neutral states tacitly to admit it in practice. The naval power at the close of the present war, (unless she should sink under the blow preparing against her,) will make a concert of mutual protection and defence absolutely necessary for the security of other maritime states; and as she will probably again never begin a war with such a general weight of alliances to support her, a combination of neutral interests will in future be much more likely to compel the admission of equitable principles than it was or could be at the commencement of her present contest.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 122 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 25 May, 1798.

SIR:

I received on the 19th instant your two favors of 17 March and that of the 19th of the same month, inclosing a credential letter for the present King of Prussia[1] and a commission to renew the treaty with Sweden, together with several packets containing newspapers and pamphlets. They were forwarded to me directly from the post office at Hamburg, as the postmaster will readily do with any packets which may be directed to me for the future.[2]

[1] The letter was presented to the king, July 5.

[2] "The P[resident] has nominated J. Q. Adams commissioner plenipotentiary to renew the treaty with Sweden. Tazewell made a great stand against it, on the

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I shall be guided by your instructions relative to the stipulations upon the subject of *neutral commerce*,[1] though I have very recently written that in my own opinion the proposal of an alteration would be inexpedient. The reasons for my opinion are given in my last letter. *Sweden and Prussia are both* strongly attached to the principle of making *the ship protect the cargo*. They have more than once contended that such is the rule even by the *ordinary laws of nations*.

A Danish author of some reputation, in a treatise upon the *commerce of neutrals in time of war*, lays it down as a rule and argues formally that by the law of nature *free ships make free goods*. Lampredi,[2] a recent Florentine author upon the same topic, has discussed the question at length and contends, that by the natural law in this case there is a collision of two

general ground that we should let our treaties drop, and remain without any. He could only get 8 votes against 20. A trial will be made to-day in another form, which he thinks will give 10 or 11 against 16 or 17, declaring the renewal inexpedient. In this case, notwithstanding the nomination has been confirmed, it is supposed the President would perhaps not act under it, on the probability that more than a third would be against the ratification. I believe, however, that he would act, and that a third could not be got to oppose the ratification." *Jefferson to Madison*, March 15, 1798. *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford), VII. 218. Madison's reply is not known, but Monroe wrote, February 25: "Mr. Adams's appointment of his son to the mission was a most reprehensible act. . . . The inattention which the enemies of such a mission, enemies from principle too, have previously shown to the measure, is proof of their extreme supineness, in cases where they ought to be active, and might be active with effect." *Writings of Monroe* (Hamilton), III. 106. "Your former powers to renew the commercial treaty with Sweden rested on the sole authority of the President, but he having deemed it proper to have your appointment for that service sanctioned by the Senate, a new patent has been issued constituting you a Commissioner for that object. If the new treaty should have been negotiated under the former powers, or is in proper train to be accomplished, it will of course be unnecessary to present the new letters patent. You will use them at your discretion." *From the Secretary of State*, March 17, 1798. Ms.

[1] Words in cipher.

[2] Giovanni Maria Lampredi (1732–1793).

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rights equally valid; that the belligerent has a right to detain, but the neutral an equal right to refuse to be detained. This reduces the thing to a mere question of force, in which the belligerent, being ready armed, naturally enjoys the best advantage. *I confess the reasoning of Lampredi has in my mind great weight, and he appears to have stated the question in its true light.*

An opinion has been industriously circulated *throughout Europe*, by the *partisans France* and of *French policy*, (how numerous they are everywhere I need not say,) that the *neutral interests and rights* have been abandoned and even sacrificed *by the United States in their treaty with Great Britain.* This idea has forced its way at least *into Sweden*, as you will perceive by my conversation with the Swedish Minister here mentioned in my last. He could not, indeed, produce any proof, and upon being requested *to cite the article*, had recourse to more general terms. Still the idea was prevalent in his mind, and I am far from being certain of having convinced him that he was in error. *A proposal to leave out of the renewed treaty an article so essential* will strongly contribute to fix the prejudice in his mind, and in that of *his government.*

From the long and repeated delay of an answer *from Sweden to the proposal for renewing the treaty*, which I made upon my first arrival here, and from the manner in which Mr. *Engeström's letter to me*, of which I have forwarded you a copy is expressed, there is reason to suppose that there is some motive for backwardness and hesitation on this score *at Stockholm.* There is a great deference *for the will of France at that court. The Directory* have treated it very much as they have *our own government*, in some instances *worse;* and very recently they withdrew by public declaration the *exequatur* from almost every *Swedish consul in France*, upon the ground of their being Frenchmen born.

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They *refused to receive* two persons appointed one after the other *as chargé des affaires at Paris*, the first because they did not like the sentiments of *the man*, and the second because they would *not admit a diplomatic character of that grade*. *The Baron de Staël* had been recalled, because *his court* thought him too *much devoted to France*. He is after all *appointed* again, though with only the *rank of a minister plenipotentiary*. *The Directory* after taking three months to consider whether they *would receive anything less than a formal ambassador*, at length admitted *M. de Staël* in the secondary character, but claimed a merit for this condescension, and imputed it to their personal regard *for the man*. You may judge from all this how important an object *Sweden considers it to conciliate France*, and perhaps to this motive may be imputed *her hesitation to renew her treaty with us*. To ascertain whether my suspicion be well founded or not *I wrote the letter to Baron d'Engeström*, of which you have a copy. If after this the *delays continue*, and we *should become* involved in unavoidable war, the *United States* will be amply justified in considering *enemy's property on board Swedish vessels as prize*, according to the customary laws of nations. *My letter* must certainly serve as a full and *fair warning*, and I meant it should. If *in answer to it* a more expeditious disposition be exhibited than *I have seen* hitherto, *I intend to propose a conditional article*, putting the principle upon a footing of reciprocity, and agreeing that the *principle* with *regard to bottom and cargo* shall depend upon the *principle guiding the Admiralty Courts of the enemy*. This will at once discover *our own inclination and attachment* to the liberal rule, and yet not make *us the victims of our adherence* to it, while violated by our adversaries. Whether the other party will in either instance *accede to this I cannot undertake to say*, but you may *be assured* that after *your last instruc-*

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tions I shall *not accede* to the *renewal of the articles* under their form in the *previous treaties*. I inclose herewith a copy of another letter which I have received from *Baron Engeström*.

When I called upon *Count Haugwitz* to notify the receipt of my *new credential letter*, I told him, I had likewise received a letter from you upon the subject of the *French decree of 4 January last*. That your letter contained upon the subject the same sentiments as those which he had expressed to me with regard to the attack upon neutral rights; a hope that the *neutral powers would not suffer it* to be carried into execution without *resistance*. He said, that although I had letters from *so far distant as America* concerning this decree, he could not say this government had received answers about it even from Paris. That a sort of inofficial declaration had come to them at second-hand from Copenhagen, (the same I have noticed in a former letter,) that this decree would not be executed, and he had heard only of one instance in which a Prussian vessel had been taken under it, and carried into Amsterdam; but the Prussian agent there had made a proper application for its restitution, and he believed that affair would be arranged without difficulty. I told him that it was *intimated in private communications which had reached the American government*, that the *northern neutral powers* had been induced to acquiesce in, or overlook this regulation, and that it was destined in fact *solely against the United States. He declared that* as far as related to this *country*, there was *certainly no foundation for this report*.

He inquired whether it was true that the American Commissioners had left, or were about to leave Paris? I answered that I had no direct intelligence from them, but from other quarters in which I could confide, I was assured that two of them had left Paris and the third yet remained.

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He asked whether their departure was *on account of this decree*. I said that as to the two Commissioners who are gone *it was not the immediate cause*, but I presumed that the third would *very soon receive instructions to withdraw likewise*, as the *President of the United States* had by a *message informed Congress*, that no hope was left of an amicable arrangement with France of the subsisting difficulties, and as the prohibitions against the arming of our merchant vessels had been withdrawn. That this was undoubtedly done in consequence of the French decree of 4 January. That the American government had taken all possible means and used every exertion to preserve its neutrality during the present war, that even yet it would not commence hostilities, and retained its desire to be neutral unimpaired; but it could not behold its commerce and navigation plundered as if at war, without either means of defence, or prospect of redress; that the merchants therefore would arm, and if the consequences produced hostility and a state of war, the United States certainly would not be chargeable with the blame of that event. Certainly not, he said, since it would only be exercising the natural right of self defence.

I believe *the Count's* declaration was perfectly true, and that the report mentioned by Mr. *Fenwick*, of the northern powers having consented to the decree was without foundation. Sweden and Denmark, I know, both made strong representations against it, though the former had then no recognized minister at Paris. I sent you some time since a translation of an *almost official*[1] paper, published in the *Rédacteur*, relating to this very opposition from the northern governments, and professing that if they persist in it, France will go to war with them without scruple. Notwithstanding this however they have made a sort of *promise to Den-*

[1] Italics in Ms.

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mark that the law should not be executed against her. They have in fact *not executed it against Prussia*, as appears from *Count Haugwitz's conversation at this time*, and this forbearance *will probably prevent any* formidable exertion on the part of *these courts* against it.

There were, I do not doubt, three reasons which led to this decree; the first to distress England, the second to injure and terrify the United States, the third to encourage their own privateers by the prospect of neutral plunder. In the first they have totally failed, for the operation of the decree has been altogether in favor of British vessels. By placing the neutral flag in as unsafe a state as the English, it has secured to the latter the preference resulting from the stronger protection of the navy, and accordingly English vessels are now preferred to any neutrals for the carriage of goods from all the north of Europe.[1]

In relating to you my conversation *with the ministers of state* here, as well as with the *Swedish minister*, I place the fullest confidence in *their not being made public in America. Such publications* produce the worst effects. It is impossible *for a man in office to say anything confidential to an American minister*, if he is led to believe that *his words may return in six month's time* open to the *knowledge of all Europe.* Nor can *we ourselves* freely and fully *communicate with you* under such an apprehension. *A cipher* in this instance is of no avail. The *danger* is not *of detection*, but of *publicity.*[2]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

[1] "As to their plan of annihilating British commerce by excluding their produce from its markets, I have no belief in its practicability. Their last piratical decree has not hurt England the value of a straw. It does not appear to have affected the course of exchange between London and the continent a farthing." To *William Vans Murray*, May 8, 1798. Ms.

[2] "Ministers who are faithful to their country give a true account of their mission,

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

May 25, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I am very much afraid our friend G[erry] will have leisure to repent his determination to remain alone.[1] Our House of Representatives have unbound all the bags of Aeolus, and God knows what and whom the hurricane will sweep away. Before this reaches you the whole scene of corruption will be unfolded to you. The publication might be of some service to rouse our countrymen at home, but why should the Commissioners be exposed to the unbridled fury of the worst of mankind?

Benjamin Constant, one of the literary courtiers of the great Directory, says in a late publication that "when the wicked are in power we ought by no means to strip them of their mask, but on the contrary should endeavor to thicken

Congress publishes their despatches, and as, according to the new order of things, ambassadors are without protection, they may lose their heads, or at least their liberty, for doing their duty!" *Rufus King to John Quincy Adams*, London, May 15, 1798. Ms.

"He [Count Panin] said he had just heard that an account of the negotiations of the American Commissioners at Paris had been published, and appeared desirous to see it. I have not yet seen it myself as published in some of the latest English papers. I cannot help regretting this publication. It discloses certain facts which are no secrets to any government having negotiations at Paris, but it contains no proof of them. All may and undoubtedly will be disavowed. But it will exasperate even to rage men with power in their hands, and capable of such transactions as those thus unfolded. They will use every expedient to do what was threatened, to throw the blame of the rupture upon the American government, and whatever of justice or truth may be deficient will be supplied by address and violence." To the *Secretary of State*, May 28, 1798. Ms.

[1] Mountflorence reported to Murray that Gerry's "confidants and particulars have been a Mr. Codman, who though not dyed in grain, is deep dyed; Mr. [Nathaniel] Cutting, who openly reviles government; and dear, amiable, clean, and sweet Tom Paine." *Murray to John Quincy Adams*, June 5, 1795. Ms.

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their disguise." This is one of the fundamental axioms of the new doctrines of morality. I am not prepared with my assent to this adage, but I yet adhere to an old one, that "the truth is not to be told at all times." Certainly the House ought to have waited until they knew our Commissioners had got out of the Augean stables.

At least this will bring things to a point. But it will leave many of our citizens and much of their property at the mercy of *France*, which a little more caution might have saved. My letters talk of unanimity in Congress, a meeting of the opposition members agreeing to support government, etc., but upon condition of a *defensive war*. Only a majority of four to permit the arming of merchant vessels.

. . . . . .

Farewell — ever faithfully yours.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

30 May, 1798.

. . . . . .

Mr. King, to whom I am much indebted for the kindness with which he constantly forwards to me the most recent intelligence from home, has sent me a pamphlet republished in England [1] from the communications made to Congress on the 3rd of April. It is equally surprising to me, as to you, that our Envoys continued at Paris so long after the transactions unfolded in their dispatches, and it redoubles the mortification which I felt upon hearing that one of them consented to remain alone, after all the indignities, to which they had been exposed and had submitted, were crowned by an order commanding two of them to quit the Republic.

[1] On May 15. It was immediately translated into French, and through a variety of channels sent into France.

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I rejoice to find that they have been formally recalled, because I believe firmly that the one left could have done by remaining any longer nothing but mischief. I know not how the Directory will conduct upon the publication of the dispatches in France; probably they will exhibit a complication of perfidy and violence, attempting to cast upon the American government, and especially the President by name, the blame of the rupture. Their newspapers before the arrival of the last accounts announced that Messrs. Pinckney and Marshall had shown *surliness* and an affectation of dignity in their proceedings; appeared *ignorant of the circumstances* of the government with which they were sent to treat, and had upon rejecting the proposals made to them by the Directory received passports to return home; while Mr. Gerry, who was *more accommodating*, remained to continue the negotiation.

There has been lately published in England some intercepted letters written by one Stone[1] and Helen M. Williams at Paris to Dr. Priestley and B. Vaughan in America. I dare say you will see the pamphlet before this letter reaches you. It is interesting on many accounts, and among other things you will find the writer telling his friends that the Directory will hear of no reconciliation with America in *John Adams's* time. He urgently invites the Doctor back to Europe, and I most heartily wish he may accept the invitation.[2] If such are his intimate correspondents, he is indeed misplaced in his present situation. There is another fact disclosed in these letters, which contributes to discover the real state of the French government. The writer says that *François de Neufchâteau*[3] was to go out of the Directory at the next

[1] J. H. Stone.

[2] See some letters from Priestley in 2 *Mass. Hist. Soc. Proceedings*, III. 21, 26.

[3] Nicolas-Louis, comte François de Neufchâteau (1750–1828).

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election. The letters were written in February. It is but a fortnight since they met with great solemnity and drew their lots with numerous precautions tending to show their extreme caution to preserve the Constitutional decision of chance.[1] The member that went out was *François de Neufchâteau*. The very same circumstance took place last year, when it was announced several days before the lots were drawn that Letourneur would go out, as he accordingly did. Such is the French constitutional rotation by lot.

. . . . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

7 June, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Yours of the 1st instant has just come to hand. I do not apprehend from present appearances that either of the Commissioners remaining in France will be arrested, or prevented from returning home. They have not the *purchase* upon them that they had in the two instances you mention. I wish that the affair of Araujo could be made public, and I think it would be politic for his court and for his reputation to make it so. The operation of our publication is already very strong, and though the German newspapers have not dared to state the facts, they are pretty well known here at present, and have been seized and circulated with as much avidity as they were with you. Do you know what Araujo's case exactly was?[2] He will not venture to publish it,

[1] The result of a *coup d'état*, known as that of 22 Floréal, An VI, which passed off peaceably for the moment. Neufchâteau was succeeded as Director by Treilhard, who had taken a prominent part in the *coup d'état* of September, 1797.

[2] "They threatened by the diplomatic skill of France and the French party in America to throw the blame of the rupture upon the American government, and

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though the danger would be so much less than it was to set the *first* example, and which I cannot help thinking was ill-timed. The English have indeed told of the proposals made

they are apparently now preparing to carry this threat into execution. The *Moniteur*, a Paris newspaper under the influence and control of the government, in a pretended article from New York, dated 12 April, says that the *French* party gains strength every day, both within Congress and out of it. The same paper has published a translation of the President's message of 19 March. At the passage where he says that the powers of the Envoys were extensive, as a liberal and pacific policy required, they have printed the word *liberal* in italics, meaning to imply that the President thereby insinuates the Envoys had powers to use bribery. You have doubtless heard how the Portuguese Minister d'Araujo was treated upon a similar occasion. The same indirect proposals for the payment of money were made to him, and as his government was in extreme need of peace, he complied with them, and paid. They took the money, but being through all their intermediates safe from detection, they were not a whit the more favorable to the minister than they had been before. He being provoked to find himself not only plundered, but cheated, told of his having paid money, and they instantly shut him up in the Temple to teach him discretion. As to the universal venality prevalent at Paris, it has long been perfectly well known and often a subject of complaints, which have, however, invariably been suppressed and generally severely punished. Such complaints were among the principal causes for the transportation of many persons involved in the 4th of September proscriptions." *To Abigail Adams*, June 11, 1798. Ms.

"Talleyrand would doubtless be made responsible for all, if he had it not in his power to expose his superiors, but I think it probable they must support him to save themselves. All negotiators are not so nice as ours fortunately were. Araujo paid, and then told of it, which occasioned his imprisonment; and if Lord Malmesbury could publish what he spent in the same way, it would amount to no small sum. The system apparently superadds swindling to common corruption. They are to be bribed for effecting nothing." *To Rufus King*, June 1, 1798. Ms. Jefferson interpreted the Araujo incident in another way. Talleyrand's corruption was known and it was likely he did participate in the demands made on the American Commissioners. "But that the Directory knew anything of it is neither proved nor probable. On the contrary, when the Portuguese ambassador yielded to like attempts of swindlers, the conduct of the Directory in imprisoning him for an attempt at corruption, as well as their conduct, really magnanimous, places them above suspicion." *Jefferson to Peter Carr*, April 12, 1798. *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford), VII. 238. On the corruption of the Directory in the conduct of foreign affairs see *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII. 494.

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through the medium of Beckford for £50,000 to the Directors, but they have not told of all that Malmesbury did give, to be finally turned away and told he must begin anew in *another quarter*.[1] The history of all the sums that have been swindled away by the great Directory in this manner from foreign negotiators would be a relation as *edifying* as the great fast ordered by John Adams is stated to be by the *Rédacteur*.

It is evident from the complexion of that paper and of the *Moniteur since* the published dispatches have reached Paris, that the Directory are enraged as was to be expected, but that they still rely upon their diplomatic skill to throw the blame of the rupture upon us, and still depend upon their party in America, which the *Moniteur* tells us was, on the 12th of April, daily increasing, both within Congress and out of it. *We* on the contrary are told of unanimity in Congress, of opposition *Caucuses* resolving not to oppose, and other flattering accounts of the same kind, upon which very little dependence is to be placed. Those men are not so easily turned; you know them better than I, and you do not suppose that such men as the *present* leaders of the French faction there, *can* be reconciled to the present government or to the present *Constitution* of the United States. I have no hopes of them, being fully convinced that they themselves first called for the aid of France to support their factious views, and I have no idea that men capable of that will scruple to sacrifice their country to their allies. There is a moral depravity seated in the minds of these people. Their principle of future amelioration to the condition of mankind destroys every trace of present principle. See

[1] Barras is stated to have approached the English commission through one Melville, of Boston, with an offer of peace for a large sum of money. Malmesbury took no notice of the offer. *Diaries and Correspondence*, III. 492.

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how Stone talks to Priestley about the events of 18 Fructidor and 22 January. Stone, in all probability with many others who profess these doctrines, are plain hypocritical rascals; but Priestley and many more of them are sincere, fanatical dupes, who as Hume observes are worse men than the others. It is possible that the dispatches and their effect out of doors will bring over some small number of the grays, but as to unanimity it were folly to expect it from the present men.

In this point of view I have some little hesitation at assenting entirely to your opinion, that active hostilities should be urged on our side. That our vessels should be permitted to arm was, I think, perfectly right, but it seems to me that you ought still to keep the defensive. Let us put on the shield and the helmet, and even draw the sword, but never cease to hold out the olive branch, and carefully keep the odium of aggression upon the enemy's shoulders. We shall need only a little patience to come to the same result, for they feel themselves so strong, so invulnerable, and so formidable, that they will increase their provocations, without needing any occasion for them on our part. Special letters of reprisal must soon be given, but at every step I hope our government will declare and prove their earnest inclination for peace. You think the war passions must be engaged; but is it not better that they should be engaged by the irritations of the enemy, than by the instigation of the government? For my own part I believe that in our country the government can never carry through any war, unless the strong, unequivocal and decided voice of the people leads them into it. The impulse must go from the circumference to the center. I have seen hitherto no such spirit, notwithstanding all the provocations indignities and injuries we have received.

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In Congress, one half of the House of Representatives have to the last moment contested every measure, even of the defensive kind. In the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, but a few days before the publication of the last dispatches and after the message of 19 March, a resolution was proposed to instruct their members in Congress against every measure that could lead to war, and it was lost only by three or four votes. Even now the most indefatigable pains are taken to throw the blame of a rupture upon our government, or rather upon the President personally, and there are men enough among us of consequence and influence most heartily disposed to second this purpose.

Let events be what they will, the idea will be maintained by many, and even a shadow of foundation would be sufficient to make it generally prevalent. I rather wish, therefore, that the present exertions may be limited to arming for defence and collecting force in case of future need.

The Directory have *laid an embargo* upon all packets, letters and papers coming from England. The English newspapers you know just at that time contained the famous dispatches of our commissioners. The *Rédacteur* has a very angry article about the *newspapers*, "with which the English government overflow the Continent with the design of separating if possible the patriots from the Directory," etc., etc., and adds that their miserable cajoleries upon John Adams will not mislead the enlightened Americans, who "*comme nous*" desire the liberty of the seas.

I could easily have the pamphlet translated here, but not so easily printed, especially just at this time. The press here is professedly in leading strings, and of course very respectful to the great Directory. I strongly suspect that the inherent interest of the thing will make it find its way without any help of mine.

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As to any shaking of sceptered hands upon principle, *do not expect it.* The sentiment deepest in the heart is mutual hatred and jealousy, artfully fostered by the common enemy. If the parties can be kept merely at peace with each other, it is all that can be hoped.

I wish it were in my power to be of any service to Mr. Mountflorence, who has indeed been found faithful among the faithless; but I have no power to appoint consuls, and if I had, a consular place here would be nothing, or much worse than nothing. I will recommend him at home, but I must own I have not succeeded in any one recommendation of that kind since I have been in Europe. I never get so much as an answer to them.[1]

Ever yours.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 125 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 18 June, 1798.

SIR:

I received this morning, under cover from the consul at Bremen, your favor of 20th April No. 4, together with a duplicate of No. 3, and a triplicate of No. 2. I have already assured you that I should act in conformity to my instructions of 15 and 17 July, renewed by your orders of 17 March, though I am fully persuaded that the proposal will in both instances be unacceptable, and may probably occasion a refusal to renew the treaties.

I had determined, as I have mentioned in former letters, to propose upon the subject a conditional stipulation, which under the present circumstances would have been

[1] Murray had spoken of Mountflorence as "the Ariel among the consuls in France."

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equivalent to an adoption of the ordinary rules of the law of nations, and at the same time have avoided an abandonment of the principle contained in the former treaties. But I find in perusing the published instructions to the late Commissioners in France, that they were ordered to endeavor for a positive stipulation to the contrary, so that the conduct of one belligerent party towards the neutral should never be alleged as the justification of similar measures by the other. It would, I apprehend, be easy to stipulate such a condition as this last here, but an engagement of this kind is not easily carried into execution.

As to the decision of the question with *Great Britain when the war is over*, I think it will be to no purpose, as I presume *Great Britain will then adhere to her own principle more firmly than ever.*

The present Swedish minister here is the person who, in the year 1793, delivered *to Mr. Pinckney certain propositions which he then forwarded to our own government, the object of which was a concert for the support of neutral rights.* He has mentioned this fact to me, and added that *no answer had ever been received to those proposals.* I have heard at various times the same observation from other *Swedish diplomatic characters*, and I find the thing noticed in *Mr. Monroe's book.*

The omission of an answer, I am confident, *was felt, and I fear still is felt by the Swedish government.* As I was altogether unacquainted with the transaction, I have more than once been embarrassed what to say, when the remarks above mentioned have been made to me.

I have lately inclosed to you some extracts from the Paris newspapers relative to the United States, containing indications of the temper of the French government towards us, and showing their reliance still upon what they call the French party in America. One of my motives for making

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these extracts has been the supposition that Mr. Gerry was before this upon his return home.[1]

In the *Rédacteur* of the 19 Prairial (9 June) are some observations upon the documents published by order of the American Senate on the 5th of April.[2] They are apparently from the office of the minister of foreign relations, though not signed by him. As the paper itself will doubtless be received in America before this letter, it were needless for me to specify its contents.

The fleet from Toulon which sailed on the 22nd of last month is said to have arrived in Corsica, and the report is very prevalent, that its destination is for Alexandria in Egypt. It is added that possession will be taken of the island of Malta on the passage, to prevent its being a place of refuge for an English fleet.

In conversation the other day with the Danish chargé des affaires he told me, that by his last accounts from Copenhagen they were expecting the arrival of the Russian fleet. I hear since that it sailed from Cronstadt, about the 1st of this month. I mentioned to him the *recent French decree relative to neutral navigation, which appears especially pointed against Denmark. He said that as far as regards their commerce, they were substantially in a state of war with France, at least of passive war; and as long as the French had nothing to lose, he saw no likelihood that it would end. I observed to him that France had something to lose, and that if the neutral powers, whose rights she tramples thus wantonly under foot, would*

[1] "The *Moniteur* has some pleasant paragraphs upon the subject. In a pretended paragraph from New York of 12 April it says, that the debates in Congress are 'très orageux'; that the French party is daily increasing in Congress and out of it, and that the war party and stock-jobbers are pale and disconcerted." *To William Vans Murray*, June 5, 1798, Ms.

[2] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 153. As the American document reached the hands of the Directory on May 28, the reply was well considered.

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combine and concert together some common system of opposition to her injustice, they would very soon bring her councils to a greater conformity with the laws of nations, or deprive her of all benefit from her colonies, and, if they please, of the colonies themselves. He assented to these remarks, and said it was to be lamented that the great distance of the neutral countries from each other rendered such a concert difficult, because so much depended upon taking advantage of particular moments; but before they could consult each other many months elapse, new occurrences dictated new expedients, and the vigor of harmony insensibly perished in the lapse of time.

The negotiations at Rastadt, since the appointment of the French plenipotentiary Treilhard [1] as member of the Directory, have been at a stand. Jean de Bry,[2] late a member of the Council of Five Hundred, has been appointed to take his place, but it seems probable that the proceedings of the Congress will in future be subordinate to another negotiation just commenced in its neighborhood. The late Director, François de Neufchâteau, was immediately after going out of office appointed ostensibly to negotiate a settlement of the affair which happened at Vienna on the 13th of April and the insult then offered to the French ambassador Bernadotte;[3] but the general report is that he is further empowered to make such arrangements as may accelerate the slow progress of the Congress.[4] As by an article of the

[1] Jean-Baptiste Treilhard (1742–1810).

[2] Jean-Antoine Joseph de Bry (1760–1834).

[3] Jean-Baptiste-Jules Bernadotte (1764–1844), then French ambassador at Vienna, acting under an injunction of the French Foreign Office, displayed the tricolor flag over the gate of the embassy on the eve of a patriotic festival. The Viennese tore it down, and this act brought the two countries to the brink of war; but the affair was settled by Cobenzl and Neufchâteau, at Selz, May 30 — July 6.

[4] The Congress opened December 16, 1797, and remained in existence for fifteen months. In that time it was a field for every form of futile and mischievous schemes and activities, and ended in a tragedy — the murder of two of the French

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French Constitution, an ex-Director is forbidden to quit within two years the territories of the Republic, the place chosen for the negotiation of François is Selz, a small town not far distant from Rastadt, where the Austrian Minister at the Congress, Count Cobenzl, has already held several conferences with him and where it is said one of the Prussian Plenipotentiaries will also be empowered to meet him.

I have heretofore mentioned the arrival of Prince Repnin here without any formal diplomatic character, but charged to negotiate an arrangement between the Emperor of Germany and the King of Prussia, relative to their respective claims of indemnity for their cessions to France beyond the Rhine. The Prince commenced by two demands, which he obtained. The first, that the conferences should be with the three ministers in the department of foreign affairs, and the other, that the registers of the conferences should be kept in the German and not as usual in the French language. *The motive for these demands is said to be a distrust of the minister in the department who has of late conducted all the diplomatic affairs of this country, and is considered as in a great measure devoted to the French interest.* To facilitate and shorten the business, the King of Prussia offered on his part to renounce all claim of indemnity, provided the Emperor would do the same, and this proposal has been acceded to. There has hitherto been made no proposal in this affair for a common defensive system between the three powers in opposition to the views of France as was expected, and if there should be made one hereafter, it will not probably succeed. The French government however have recalled

envoys, as they left the town without protection. Jean de Bry was left for dead, but escaped; Bonnier and Roberjot were killed outright. "In its defiance of the law of nations for the attainment of petty ends, as in its mysterious ineffectiveness, the outrage stands without a parallel in the modern history of civilised nations." *Cambridge Modern History*, VIII. 656.

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their present Minister Plenipotentiary at this Court, Caillard, and appointed Sieyès to take his place, with whom Otto is to come as secretary of legation. The French government wished to give Sieyès the character of Ambassador, but this I understand was declined by the King, who did not choose to run the risk of perpetual controversies of etiquette and precedency to which the rank of an Ambassador is liable to give rise.

I received a few days ago a letter from a person styling himself Lieutenant of the Royal Marine and knight of the order of St. Louis, offering his services to the United States in the war, which he says he is informed they have with France. For various reasons I have not answered this letter. *If a war should take place I have no doubt but numerous offers and solicitations of the same kind would be made, but* as the Directory have just declared their desire to live at peace with the Americans, and shown that they are not altogether insensible of the fate which must befall their colonies in case of a different event, I have yet some feeble hope that a war may be avoided, which I know will be the most earnest and anxious desire of the American government, however offensive and unjust the imputations, and however unfriendly the language used in the defence attempted by the minister of foreign relations, against the documents published by order of the Senate.

I suppose that before the receipt of this letter Mr. Mountflorence will have arrived in America; his conduct has been uniformly honorable, and his zeal and activity in the real service of his country, exemplary and deserving of better success. Such at least is the opinion I have formed as far as his transactions have come within my knowledge, and I am persuaded he will have a suffrage equally favorable from those who have been more intimately conversant with them.

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I think him highly deserving of the notice of government, for any employment in a line similar to that in which he was placed that may be deemed expedient.

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

19 June, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

At length Talleyrand, the incorrupt, has come forth foaming and snarling with all the symptoms of mania that were to be expected. He denies none of the facts stated by the Commissioners, but vents all his rage upon them personally and upon the President. Bestows a very liberal portion of abuse upon Gerry, but at the same time flatters him with a pointed and odious discrimination from his colleagues. Accuses the Commissioners of keeping themselves studiously distant from the government to which they were sent, (as if they had not been denied a reception,) and of listening to foreign adventurers, who have now wisely withdrawn from the French territories. He lays all proper stress upon the fact that no proposal from an *official* source for the £50,000 was made,[1] and freely avows the demand of a loan upon the Batavian rescriptions.

Our Jacobins, therefore, must change their batteries, and instead of denouncing Talleyrand as a royalist, fight under his banners against our government upon the same charge of propensity to royalism. For he has introduced much matter of this kind in his Philippic, which is apparently written to suit our meridian. But this error of our Jacobins as to their best post of attack and defence, they must lay

[1] It was true that no one of the then agents concerned in this affair was connected officially with the Department of Foreign Affairs.

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altogether to the charge of Gerry; for in his account of his interview with Talleyrand, on the 28th of October, he expressly states, that Talleyrand himself made two distinct demands for money: one to remove the demand of recantation with respect to the President's speech, and the other for a loan in case that difficulty should be adjusted. Now they never dreamt, that after this G[erry] would certify that no proposal from an official source for hush-money was made, and could not discover that they must admire Talleyrand's democratic ardor, instead of stigmatizing him as a royalist.

It is, however, impossible for a defence to be more lame, more feeble, more destitute of reasonable argument, than that which Talleyrand has now published. Such is the opinion of it here. You, I am sure, will find it so. Yet it is amply sufficient for the logic of faction, and will have its effect upon our Frenchified patriots.

There is one point that it discloses with overflowing evidence. *That they do not wish an open rupture now*, and that they are alarmed at the spirit which the publication roused in our country. Amidst numerous proofs of the most inveterate hostility against our government it contains great professions of friendship for the American people, and an assurance that notwithstanding this great provocation, France will not declare war against us. I wonder whether G[erry] believes the professions of friendship?

. . . . . .

Ever faithfully yours.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

22 June, 1798.

Since the date of my last letter I have received your favor of the 8 April, with the pamphlets mentioned in it. The

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communications of the American Commissioners have resounded through every part of Europe, and produced a very sensible impression in the public opinion with regard to the characters exposed in them. An attempt at defence has been made by a publication in the official newspaper of the Directory, but which, as far as I have heard, has only corroborated and confirmed the suspicions, which naturally resulted from the proceedings developed in the dispatches of the Commissioners.[1]

The paper of which I speak is not signed, but has every other appearance of proceeding from the hand of Talleyrand himself, and is accompanied by several letters between him and Mr. Gerry, and one to him from Hauteval, acknowledging that he is the person designated by the letter Z.[2] As this paper will doubtless be public in America before the arrival of this letter, I shall only mention a few remarks which it suggested to me, and which I doubt not will occur to others and be properly unfolded to the American public. It is throughout in a very angry style of crimination against the American government, against the President, against all the three Commissioners, but intermixed with compliments and flattery for Mr. Gerry; under the bitterness of its invective, it seems as if it expected to pass imperceptibly over the real point of its own defence, for it does not deny one fact alleged in the reports of the Commissioners.

It charges them with having kept themselves distant from the government to which they were sent, and listened at the same time to foreign intriguers who only wished to dupe them. As if they had not been denied reception. As if they had not for a long time been informed from Talleyrand that he could not see them at all.

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 224.

[2] *Ibid.*, 226.

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As to the proposal relative to the purchase of Batavian inscriptions, he freely acknowledges it; as well as the demand that the President's speech of 16 May [1797] should be retracted and explained. It appears to be very much disconcerted at the prospect that the publication of these papers will weaken the effect, which Talleyrand meant to produce by his *official* communications to the envoys, where all the diplomatic skill of France was employed to throw the blame of aggression upon the American government, and to improve the dispositions of the French party in America for the benefit of the Directory. It abuses the American government for not publishing the *official* documents, while it was so anxious to display the others. The Bishop-Noble-Emigrant Citizen Minister knew very well that on the 3rd of April, when the published dispatches were communicated to Congress, his skillful official letters could not possibly have been received in America, and of course could not be published with the rest; but through his whole publication he appears to think a confusion of dates is a very easy mode of passing impositions upon the public.

He demands finally who W X Y and Z are of Mr. Gerry, who finally gives him the names of X and Y, but answers that he knows of W only by hearsay, and Z means himself. But in truth the only person whom it could be necessary for Talleyrand to know for his defence upon the imputation of corruptibility was Y, and why should he ask Mr. Gerry to name him? The papers themselves designated *to Talleyrand* who Mr. Y was as well as Mr. Gerry could do, since they detailed a conversation between these two ministers at which Y is stated to have been present and in which Talleyrand told Mr. Gerry that the information Y had given him, "was just and might always be relied on." This fact proves that Y was at that time and for that purpose an agent of

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Talleyrand, and as the latter could not but recollect the interview related in the dispatch, he could have no occasion to inquire of Mr. Gerry who Y was.

But it is to be remembered that the American Commissioners had promised X and Y that their names should not be published. This promise was not obligatory to Talleyrand, whom it would be natural to expect Y's conduct, if unauthorized, had greatly injured and offended, and whom one would suppose anxious to proclaim him by name in the face of the world as a cheat and impostor. The circumstances indeed seemed to call for such an exposure; for after Talleyrand had expressly told Mr. Gerry that he might rely upon Y's information, and after numerous other demonstrations that Y had acted in this business under authority from Talleyrand, such corrupt proposals as Y made, if without authority, were more offensive and injurious to Talleyrand and the Directory, than to the American envoys and government. Their tendency was only to plunder the latter, but to disgrace the former. To steal from these only their purse, but to filch from those their good name.

By calling upon Mr. Gerry for the names, Mr. Talleyrand probably expected that he would give those of X and Y, only upon condition that they should not be made public; a condition which would have been readily complied with, and might have relieved the French minister from some embarrassment, by furnishing him with an apology for keeping them secret. Mr. Gerry was aware of this, and therefore in his answer besides intimating to Talleyrand that he knew as well as himself who Y was, he only stipulates that the names shall not be published as *coming from him*, and thereby leaves Talleyrand at full liberty to publish them from his own knowledge. This, however, he has not done; he tells the world that they are foreigners, and have quitted the

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territories of the Republic. That X had no acquaintance with him, and that Y had been recommended to him but never had his confidence; and he intimates the necessary condition of every minister holding his department, which obliges him to see and listen to many persons with whom he has no connection.

In reply to this it is not necessary to inquire how Y became acquainted with all the proposals which Talleyrand intended officially to make to the Commissioners, and was the first to announce them; or how he became possessed of copies of his official letters before they were sent. More direct proof renders presumptive evidence needless. In the interview between Talleyrand, Mr. Gerry and Y, on the 17th of December, Mr. Gerry tells us that "he observed to Mr. Talleyrand in English, slowly, that Mr. Y had stated to him that morning some propositions as coming from Mr. Talleyrand, respecting which Mr. Gerry could give no opinion." It is in answer to this that Mr. Talleyrand tells Mr. Gerry, that "Y—'s information was just and might always be relied on."

Mr. Gerry certifies indeed that X and Y never produced any authority for negotiating, and that fact was already clearly and unequivocally established by the dispatches themselves. Yet Talleyrand lays as much stress upon this admission, as if the imputation he was called upon to repel had really been a charge of *official* proposals for corruption. This extreme anxiety to disprove what was never asserted, leaves the real ground of suspicion undisputed, and adds a strong presumption that it was not susceptible of refutation.

Indeed the extreme caution in keeping the appearances of official purity is apparent through all the transactions, and is peculiarly evident in an incident related in the account

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of the abovementioned interview on the 17th of December. Mr. Gerry told Talleyrand that upon his propositions made through M. Y *that morning*, he *could give no opinion*. Now one of these propositions not only regarded the £50,000 gratuity, but even suggested a mode whereby they might be raised.

Talleyrand answers that Y's information then and always might be relied upon as just, "but that he would reduce to writing his propositions, which he accordingly did." In this writing not a syllable was said about the £50,000, but the other proposition made that morning by Y was formally made in it. This writing Talleyrand showed to Mr. Gerry, and then immediately burnt it. The object in writing it, therefore, is easily divined. Mr. Talleyrand wished Mr. Gerry to give full credit to Y's propositions, and therefore verbally confirmed them generally. But at the same time the possible necessity of a future disavowal might occur, especially as Mr. Gerry said he could give no opinion upon the proposals. The writing, therefore, contained only that which might officially be maintained, and all the appearances of official decorum were preserved against the effects which might proceed from the general confirmation, verbally made of Y's proposals.

The demand for £50,000 gratuity was very often repeated, and once stated by Y as coming from Talleyrand himself, and Talleyrand had told Mr. Gerry that the difficulty with regard to the President's speech might be removed by the offer of money; but that if it should, an application for a loan would nevertheless be made.

It is certainly possible that Y had no authority from Talleyrand to make the proposals to pay money for purposes of corruption; but if this were the case, would Talleyrand now pretend in contradiction to his own words, in

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contradiction to a long series of irresistible proofs, that Y had none of his confidence, that he was merely an intriguing foreigner with whom he had scarcely any acquaintance, and that the American envoys in listening to him at all, had only shown their *deplorable credulity*. Would he now accuse the American Commissioners of keeping themselves distant from a government, which had refused to receive them? Would he shrink from the investigation of the real suspicions arising against him, and endeavor to drown them in a flood of invective against the Commissioners, against the American government, against the President, against the British government? Would he have taken refuge in odious insinuations, or have hoped to find a shield in calumniating speculative opinions? No! He would have boldly named the man whose conduct had disgraced and betrayed his confidence. He would have acknowledged the authority and agency that he did really give him to confer with the American Commissioners informally, and denied ever having hinted to him anything like the proposals for private hushmoney.

There is no evidence that the corrupt propositions were known to any member of the Directory. But it is somewhat surprising that they should have deemed such a defence as Talleyrand has published a sufficient justification, so as to continue him in the department of foreign affairs.

It may further be remarked that the mode of proceeding with regard to the American envoys was extraordinary, and must be supposed to be founded upon some motive. The Directory had previously refused to receive one of them, and ordered him to quit the territories of the Republic. The reason then alleged by their writers was, that his powers were not sufficiently extensive. They now permitted the Commissioners to come to Paris, and furnished them with cards of hospitality. But they would not receive them, and

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for a long time the minister of foreign relations refused to have any direct communication with them.

Their consent to the several payments of money was made a preliminary to their reception. What other motive could occasion this conduct than the desire of extorting money from the personal considerations of the Commissioners? Two of them very decidedly declare themselves against this demand of tribute. The third appeared more disposed to comply with it. "France lent money to the United States, why should not they in return lend money to France?" This, he says, would have been repeated to the envoys from one end of France to the other. The answer to this argument made by the Commissioners he does not notice. That when France lent money, the act was perfectly voluntary, an option of her own, which she was at liberty to refuse, and that her demand now is made as an indispensable preliminary to negotiation, and made in the midst of accumulating hostilities and depredations upon those from whom she would thus borrow. The envoys might have added, that when France lent money it was during a war in which she and the United States were making a common cause. That she was under no obligations of neutrality forbidding the loan as the United States are now. That the loan was made upon fair and equal conditions, upon a well founded expectation that she would be repaid. That she had the obligation of the United States for repayment, and knew by her own superiority of force that she should possess if necessary the means of compelling it. That the consideration was equal and reciprocal, as she gave no more than she would receive with good interest. But in selling the Batavian rescriptions she contracted no obligation for their payment. She insisted upon their purchase at par, when they were confessedly depreciated to half their nominal value; so that under the name

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of a loan she exacted a real gift of one half its amount, and meant to be under no sort of obligation for the repayment of the remainder. That the whole amount of the sums lent by France (not more I think than half a million sterling,) was to a nation of her wealth and population an object scarcely perceptible, while the sums she now demanded, if granted, would bear upon the United States as a burthen altogether intolerable. That with twenty-five millions of people and thirty millions sterling of revenue, he had lent us about half a million, and now asked of us, with one-fifth of those numbers and less than one-fifteenth of that revenues to lend her nearly three times as much, and in truth to give her more than the whole of what she had never loaned.

The citizen Talleyrand says that the publication of the dispatches from the Commissioners was a deplorable provocation on the part of the American government. I hope, indeed, the time will come when the people of the United States will be thoroughly convinced that their executive government ought to be fully entrusted with all their foreign negotiations, and that such publications must necessarily be extremely dangerous to their interests. But as long as the legislature of the Union will insist upon knowing everything, and the spirit of the people supports them in this pretension, there is no remedy; the evil is inevitable. The publication is a necessary consequence of the communication. We saw three years ago that an injunction of secrecy was ineffectual even in so small a body as the Senate, when its members are divided in their political opinions and inflamed by the spirit of party.[1] How much more certainly must this occur, when the secret is divulged to yet another body, three or four times as numerous.

[1] Referring to the publication of Jay's Treaty by Stephen Thomson Mason, a Senator from Virginia.

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In the present instance there was certainly no provocation on the part of the President, for he gave a caution against the publication at the time when he sent the papers. Yet the French Minister, with all the diplomatic skill of his country, vents his resentment against the President, by slanderous insinuations and false assertions, calculated to foment the prejudices and inflame the jealousies of the American people against their chief magistrate. In doing this he is very careful to pursue the track of the party in the United States supposed to be devoted to France and opposed to the measures of the President. His performance in this part is almost a repetition of a speech made last winter by a member of the House of Representatives upon the foreign intercourse bill, which speech was the only one upon that occasion that has appeared translated in the Paris newspapers.

At the close of this sort of manifesto, full as it is of the most determined though insidious hostility against the American government and its President, there is a declaration that the French Directory ardently and sincerely desires to be at peace with America. But there is also evidence contained in it, that they begin to perceive that in case of a war, America would not be so impotent and despicable an enemy as they have long affected to consider her. They appear sensible how dependent their colonies are upon the United States, and are willing to *debase themselves* to a calculation of the consequences which a war would produce to France *at this time*. Nothing can more forcibly prove, that if they saw *firmness* and *union* on the part of America, they would shrink from their extravagant demands and cease at least some part of their excessive and unjust depredations. All their efforts, therefore, are while they continue their hostilities to *weaken* and *divide* us. They pursued their game (my

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heart bleeds to acknowledge it,) but too successfully with the Commissioners, one of whom will, I fear, never justify to his country his abandonment of his colleagues, under an impression of terror and under a menace of rupture which he could have no reasonable hope of preventing. The same artifice is eminently conspicuous through the whole of the publication of which I now speak. Its weakness of argument, its disregard or inaccuracy of fact, has been amply exposed above. As a defence of Talleyrand against strong presumptive evidence of corruptibility, it is nothing — less than nothing; but as an artful and insidious declamation, provoking war amidst professions of peace, courting every passion, enlisting every prejudice to set the Americans at opposition with their own government and at enmity among themselves, it is written with great ability. It is no less than might be expected from the bosom friend of Mirabeau, one of the ablest and most corrupt of men.

You wish to live at peace with America, and in answer to her complaints of violence and rapine, after rejecting her ministers of peace, you tell the Americans that the men in their highest offices are the blind and servile tools of Great Britain; that they wish to make them adopt the British Constitution, and are rushing into war to force it upon the people. Is this language pacific? Is it friendly towards the American government? Could inveteracy the most deadly say more? But your friendship is for the people, not for the government. Have not all your injuries, all your depredations, been committed upon the people? Have the government even *complained* of any personal injury done to them, however great their occasion? Have the long series of executive *arrêtés* and legislative decrees contrary to the solemn stipulations of your treaties, contrary to the universally recognized laws of nations, contrary to the com-

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mon principles of humanity; have the numberless depredations committed without any *arrêté* or decree, but under color of your authority, and to a representation of which you refuse to listen, have not all these been acts of hostility to the people? Are you now more ready to redress these wrongs? Have you repealed those *arrêtés* or decrees? Have you ever ceased to execute them? If on the contrary they are all continued and increasing, what is your declaration of peace and friendship but a smile upon the face, while you plunge the stiletto to the heart?

Such it appears to me would be the natural and just reply of every true American. If, however, the Directory really felt any disposition of peace or friendship towards us, I most ardently desire that every just disposition may be met with a similar spirit of conciliation, not by base and degrading submission to injustice unrepaired and unremoved; not by humiliating and oppressive contributions under the name of loans; not by bribes through channels formal or informal, through native Frenchmen or foreign intriguers, but by an unaltered, an unalterable system of truth and justice, and an honest determination even after all that has happened to do for the friendship of France everything consistent with the duties of a neutral, and the rights and honor of a free and independent nation.]

I remain &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 125 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 25 June, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

An extract from the *Moniteur*, which you will find inclosed, threatens the United States with a speedy revolution;

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says that the *friends of liberty* are furious against the President and Senate, and loudly disavow their conduct. That the House of Representatives, in a great measure, share this indignation, and that even the next elections, to take place in October, may probably not be waited for to destroy the fatal influence of the President and Senate.

Such, Sir, is the nature of the accounts from America, which alone find their way to the French newspapers. I mentioned in my last a long publication *upon the communications of the President to Congress*, which has appeared in the *Rédacteur*. But neither these communications themselves, nor any statement of them conformable to truth, has to this day been seen in any one of the French public prints, and an embargo was laid by the Directory upon all papers and packages from England, just at the time when the English prints were full of the dispatches from our Envoys.

By the latest papers from Paris it is said that Mr. Gerry is not gone, and probably will not go. If this be the case, I presume he has very substantial proofs of a disposition in that government more conciliatory than they have long discovered, or than the publication in the *Rédacteur* would lead to expect. For as he has received his letter of recall, he will certainly stay upon no other alternatives than those allowed him in them. The French papers likewise mention that Garnier de Saintes,[1] late a member of the Convention, is appointed consul at Wilmington in the United States.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

[1] Jacques Garnier de Saintes (1755–1817). He sought safety in the United States in 1816, and was drowned with others in attempting to cross the Ohio River.

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

27 June, 1798.

I have now received your letter of 21 April, not however by the way of Bremen, but from Hamburg, though I had just received another packet from the State Department of the same date from the consul at Bremen. With your last came likewise other letters of a date as recent as 7 May, one of them from you to my brother. For your pamphlets and newspapers likewise I have to renew my thanks.

I am satisfied from a view of the newspapers and the situation of the public mind which they represent, that the publication of the dispatches called for by Congress was *necessary*, though I am still convinced it was dangerous, and am far from being sure that it will not produce mischievous effects.[1] I have sent you some observations upon the late official though unsigned paper, which closes with a declaration that the Directory ardently wish to live at peace with America. I have there noticed that nothing can be more *avowedly* hostile to the American government, than the whole tenor of the very publication which terminates with such pacific promises.

A paragraph in the *Moniteur* may serve to explain this apparent inconsistency. It says that the *friends of liberty* in the United States, supported by a great part of the House of Representatives, will probably not wait for the next elections, but in the mean time will destroy the fatal influence of the President and Senate *by a Revolution*. This being the expectation of the French government, it is easy to perceive that their promises of peace and friendship are meant only for those friends of liberty who are to effect the Revolution; that they are the pledges of alliance between France and the party opposed to the government of the United States.

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 153.

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This alliance has long since been well understood to exist. On the part of France it was the result of a system of policy much more ancient than their Revolution — the system of connecting the French influence with the party in that country opposed to the existing government. This system was not always followed from a pure and disinterested love of liberty, for if it was constantly employed in Holland to reduce the influence and power of the Stadtholder, it was equally energetic in Sweden to enlarge the prerogatives of the King. This policy was not even peculiar to the French monarchy. It is the policy natural between a great state and a small free one; it is founded deep in the human character, and all history is full of it, in ancient as well as modern times. This fact ought to be well considered by every genuine and impartial American. In our country many people disbelieve it on the present occasion, and others seem to consider it as an extraordinary if not incredible thing. Many who believe in it imagine, that the connection will soon decline and disappear, in which opinion they will certainly find themselves deceived.

It is curious to observe the manner in which Mr. Monroe speaks of this combination. "We have heard much of intrigues between the *people* of these states and the government of France. But free people seldom intrigue together."[1] Where Mr. Monroe ever heard much of such intrigues I know not, and I doubt much whether any one besides himself ever heard of them. Of intrigues between the French government and certain individuals of these states holding offices of importance most people have heard, and if they had never been heard of before, Mr. Monroe's book would have brought them sufficiently to light; and if it be true that free people have no motive to intrigue, there are motives

[1] Monroe, *View of the Conduct of the Executive*, lxv.

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enough apparent to influence some of their leaders (as Mr. Monroe calls them) to it, and proofs enough to show them not to be so scrupulous as Mr. Monroe would have us believe, in their choice of a party with whom to intrigue. He tells us that none but monarchs intrigue with the leaders of a free people, and appeals to the Grecian history at a period when the only power that could have any influence over them, and of course with whom the leaders could intrigue, was a king. But if Mr. Monroe had chosen another period when the Greek Republics received a nominal restoration of their liberty by a Roman consul, or had he chosen to recollect any part of the Roman history, he would have found that the government of a Republic was as capable of intriguing with the leaders of a free people as neighboring monarchs.

There is one point, however, in which the practice of the French government at present is essentially different from that of their former monarchy or that of the ancient Romans. It is in their treatment of their own partisans in foreign countries, after they have once obtained the object for which they employed them. This is a very serious object of consideration to those leaders of a free people, who call in the help of France to effect a revolution in their government.

In Holland, France declared war against the Stadtholder only, and her troops entered the country amidst the most solemn protestations of friendship for the people. The party within the Batavian Republic opposed to the government either believed those protestations, or preferred to be conquered rather than miss the Revolution. They treated with France while her troops were advancing; they met with every encouragement from France, and in proportion as the French armies entered every town, that party took the nominal government into its hands. But when 70,000 armed

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Frenchmen were once possessed of the whole country, then the French government considered the very people to whom they had been all the while swearing peace and friendship as a *conquest*. Then came requisitions, quartering of soldiers passing of assignats, with innumerable other burthens and vexations, and finally a treaty of alliance, surrendering up the barrier towns, the only possible defence against future invasion, and stipulating the payment of 100 millions of florins by the people. Since then France has kept an Army of 25,000 men constantly in Holland, to be paid by the Batavian people, but always under the supreme control and direction of the French government. Under her patronage the Revolutionary party have totally destroyed the ancient constitution of the country, and introduced another in its stead. But almost every individual of the party has been forcibly expelled from the government, and the most distinguished have all been thrown into prisons and dungeons by proceedings under the immediate direction of the French government. The legislative and executive authorities have been twice dissolved by military force within the space of six months. Holland, a country whose existence is commerce, has been three years forced to take part in a war, which had proved almost a total suspension of her trade, and in which she has lost her most valuable colonies, and now remains totally dependent upon France for any hopes of recovering them.

In Italy, France has been no less ardent and zealous in her professions of friendship for the people of its various nations. There, too, in the name of this friendship, she has everywhere conquered. At Venice she destroyed the government, seized and appropriated all the public property, and then gave up the people, the dear objects of her friendship, to the Emperor. The Cisalpine and Roman Republics could tell a tale

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no less edifying of French friendship, as well as Genoa and Geneva.

But the most recent and perhaps most instructive example of all is that of Switzerland. You have seen how France began to show her enmity to the governments and friendship to the people of that country, by taking under her special protection certain insurgents against the government of Berne, and declaring that she would hold every individual member of that government responsible for every act in opposition to those insurgents. From that time you have seen her overthrow every government of Switzerland, and at the point of the bayonet force down upon the people, her friends, a constitution made for them at Paris, and in which they had not the smallest participation. Thousands of these people have been butchered by her armies, and at length a legislative and executive power conformable to the prescribed constitution have been assembled. The only business of these authorities is to complain against the cruel distresses and intolerable oppressions of the *people*, proceeding from the French army.

Such contributions have been required of all the families connected with the governments destroyed as utterly to ruin them. But as to them not a word is to be said. They were *Oligarchs*. Besides this, almost all the Cantons possessed public treasures from which the small expenses of their governments were supported. It was public property, and the members of the government never dreamt it was theirs. A French commissary (*Rapinat by name*) has seized upon the treasures for the benefit of France. The Helvetic executive and legislature interposed and claimed the property; even Mengaud the French agent supports them, but Rapinat proceeds with numerous tokens of insult and mockery, carries off the treasures; the French government

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openly approve and ratify his conduct, and immediately recall and dismiss Mengaud with public reproaches for his pusillanimity. In their own country the French have always declared every species of public as well as much private property to belong *to the nation.* But whenever they go with their arms among their friends of other countries, they consider all their public property as belonging not to the nation, but to the government, and accordingly seize it for themselves *by right of conquest.* Such has proved uniformly and invariably the friendship of the French Republic for the people, wherever her troops have penetrated. An American, therefore, may well be alarmed when he finds her declaring peace and friendship for the Americans, in connection with violent and slanderous invectives against their government.

Mr. Gerry remains yet at Paris, and the newspapers say he is not going away. They further announce that the Directory have appointed two new consuls, one to Wilmington, and the other to New York. The latter, a man by the name of Sottin.[1] He was for some months after the last 4th of September Minister of Police, and upon resigning that office was appointed Minister with the Ligurian Republic [Genoa]. The *Moniteur* says that he was recalled for having invited the Ligurian government (*in writing*) to support an insurrection in Piedmont against the King of Sardinia, and assured them that in so doing they would please the French Directory. It happened, however, that just at that time the French Directory were declaring to the world, that they were supporting their ally the King of Sardinia against these very insurgents. They have therefore punished Sottin's written indiscretion by recalling him, but send him as consul to New York, where they think perhaps that he may freely indulge his partiality in favor of *insurgents.* . . .

[1] Pierre-Jean-Marie Sotin de la Coindière (1764–1810).

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

[BERLIN,] 3 July, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I regret very much that you could not procure the letter from young D[edem], published in Gosse's paper, but I hope you got one for our side of the water; every circumstance of this kind well attested is precious, because the effect of our documents which let in the first light under *France's* mask amply proves that deep as she is in guilt, she dreads detection and hopes to escape it.[1]

Mr. Y has come forward with a publication in which he takes his cue from Talleyrand. Like him he undertakes to *prove* what he has not the face to *assert*. Like him he abuses all the Commissioners, and at the same time courts Gerry, the only one who may be charged with some little injustice towards him. He pretends to prove by the accounts of the Commissioners themselves that he, Mr. Y, otherwise called Bellamy[2] of Hamburg, never lisped a

[1] "Dedem's vindication of his letter has nothing in it to surprize. In such a school as he has for the last three years frequented, youth and inexperience will naturally give the most striking examples of depravity. I knew him before he was introduced into the diplomatic career. Bred at Constantinople and tutored by *France*, no wonder he shows such proficiency in the practice, which accompanies the new doctrines." *To William Vans Murray*, July 22, 1798. Dedem intimated that while at Paris Talleyrand had begged that no money should be put into the hands of Mr. Buys, the Dutch agent, or himself, as the government would avoid any of "those appearances," but the young man added, "you must understand that to mean that whatever money is used, must not be *so freely* used." Dedem explained the letter by asserting that he was deceiving the Directory in Holland and accelerating the change that was to overset them.

[2] "This Bellamy was originally a Genevan, a great intriguer on what was there called the aristocratic party; tried by a revolutionary tribunal, and by a miracle escaped shooting under its sentence, fled his country and got into some sort of commercial business at Hamburg. The Genevans here were as much astonished at finding him doing the filthy business of French democracy, as if they should

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syllable about the 1,200,000 livres. His proofs are about as strong as those of Talleyrand. They rest upon two facts: 1. that neither of the Commissioners understood French, and he Bellamy understands no English; 2. that Mr. Marshall says he understood the proposal concerning Beaumarchais's suit differently from the manner in which it is related in the public letter. But if you turn to the dispatches, you will find that it is Gerry who bears the most decisively and unequivocally upon poor Mr. Y. It is, therefore, not a little amusing to see how Y now labors to revile all the Commissioners, and yet to flatter Gerry.

There is one thing, however, which he asserts in the most positive terms, and which no doubt is true. That in the whole course of the business he neither said, nor did, nor wrote, anything, without the express direction and authority of Talleyrand. This to be sure is totally inconsistent with Talleyrand's pretension that Y was a person almost a stranger to him, and in whom he had no confidence. In short, my dear sir, the arrow sticks in the side, and the more they try to pull it out the larger they make the wound. If they can only procure a declaration from Mr. X likewise, arguing from the Commissioners themselves, that they never heard a word about the diplomatic gratification, the fact will appear clear as day, that their refusal to give it was the only ground for all those insinuations that they were not disposed to conciliate and not desiring of peace. This Mr. X, says Y, was a citizen of the United States.

They have now shut up the port of Havre against Americans, but they are desirous to live at peace with us.[1] They are sending to New York a man whom they recalled from Genoa for stimulating the Ligurians in support of insurgents;

hear it of d'Ivernois, Mallet du Pan, or du Rouveray." *To Rufus King*, July 11, 1798. Ms.

[1] *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 357.

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but they intend nothing hostile. They are sending a consul and vice consul where Mr. Grove[1] [in] Congress lately said there might be 5000 men ready to receive them, and to take arms from them to Wilmington; but they mean us nothing but friendship. They are exulting in the distress of our commerce, and boast that our vessels at Hamburg can get no freights. And will all this go unavenged? No! It cannot, it will not. There is a God to punish, if there is none to protect. . . .

I am very sorry that your answer to the address of 22 January has been so disapproved as to give you pain. The situation was delicate, and upon such occasions it is extremely difficult to settle upon the exact point between the *too much* and the *too little*. The only part of your paper which then struck me as objectionable was the approbation expressed, when it was not felt. For there appears to me to be the line of discrimination. We are not bound to utter what we think, but we are to think what we utter. It was empty compliment. But there was a probability that it would not be so considered, either by the party then prevailing or by those whom they had overthrown, if they should recover their power. As to the rest, I for my part thought you noticed very properly the omission of the United States in the general assurance of friendship for the powers of Europe. I am aware that by avoiding those expressions of approbation there is a risk of offending, and a great probability of exciting coolness; but this cannot be helped, and must be incurred I think rather than a suspicion of insincerity.[2]

[1] William Barry Grove, a member of Congress from North Carolina. *Annals of Congress*, 5th Congress, 1397.

[2] "My language of empty compliment, empty I meant it, is contrasted with my real sentiments which I gave in my account of that affair. . . . I believe I ought not to have answered without an explanation. I see that this was an *error*." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, June 25, 1799. Ms.

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It is an uncomfortable dilemma, from both horns of which it is in these times impossible to escape. You remember how Genet abused the late President for not declaring himself for the French revolution, which overthrew the constitution of 1791. On the presentation of the flag he did declare himself, and you know how much they have since abused him for insincerity in that declaration.

Ever faithfully yours.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

[BERLIN,] 7 July, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I received my new credential letter for the present king, just as he was upon the point of departure for Prussia, so that I could not have an audience to deliver it until after his return. A minister from Malta, a Frenchman by the name of M. de Maisonneuve was in the same predicament. While the king was absent, arrived a Count Schall, with a commission from the Elector of Bavaria, and lastly the citizen Sieyès. The King received us all four, the day before yesterday at Charlottenburg, a country residence about three miles from Berlin. Maisonneuve had been here longer than I waiting for a reception. He had not only to receive a renewal of credentials, but the French government had formally interfered and objected against his reception at all, on the ground of his being an emigrant. You know the character of Sieyès, and his vote upon the trial of Louis. The minister who introduced us successively to the King has been fifty years in office. We were all appointed for the same hour, and accordingly met all together in the ante-chamber.[1] Now don't you think there must have been something

[1] See Adams, *Memoirs*, July 3–6, 1798.

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dramatic in such an assemblage? For my own part I felt just enough at my ease to enjoy it. The king had given me a private audience last winter, and I had since often seen him in public, so that I felt no embarrassment on this occasion. I had seen Sieyès in May, 1795, at the Hague, once, and that circumstance gave me an opportunity to accost him and remind him of it. He did not recollect it, but was more civil now than I found him then.

Yesterday presented a scene more public, and yet more full of contrast — the ceremony of taking the homage. It was performed first in a large hall of the royal palace, by the deputies from the several provincial states, and afterwards by the deputies from the citizens in a large square in front of the palace, while the king stood in a balcony under a canopy of state prepared for the occasion. The foreign ministers were all invited, and present at the ceremony in the hall; a particular box was appropriated for them where they were all assembled together. Sieyès and Caillard were both there, and you will readily believe that the former attracted no small part of the public attention.[1] The Austrian, Russian and British ministers were in the box, but

[1] "His [Sieyès] appointment was not agreeable. The king, it is said, intimated that Caillard was very agreeable to him and he wished for no change. But the Directory insisted upon it, because no motive was *assigned* against the successor. These are the people who tell us that mutual *confidence* is essential in the choice of a negotiator. Otto made the observation to me the first time I saw him, accompanied with the further remark, that, on this account, *Gerry* was a very good choice. It was in the Palace, at this ceremony. Sieyès and Caillard were both near us when he said it. I was violently tempted to answer him, but controlled myself, as I knew it was what he wanted. Caillard is universally esteemed and regretted." *To William Vans Murray*, July 10, 1798. Ms.

"The new French minister, Sieyès, was present in the diplomatic box. He asked me whether we had many public ceremonies in the United States. I told him, many; that we were quite a ceremonious people, and instanced particularly the solemnities with which our State legislatures annually meet. He said it was very

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Prince Repnin, having no formal diplomatic character, was in another.

Otto talked to me some time about the situation of our affairs with them, and professed very ardently to desire a reconciliation. He, too, was an old acquaintance of mine, and he too had forgotten it. He first went to America with the Chevalier de la Luzerne, and I went then in the same vessel with them; but as this was nearly twenty years ago, and I was then a boy, it is not surprising that he had lost the recollection of me. He says he did not see Mr. Gerry at Paris. He was there however but a very short time, having been for the last two years altogether retired from affairs, and living in the country.

This ceremony of taking the homage would be very interesting, if it were performed with such a spirit of enthusiasm as we are used to in our public solemnities. There were assembled, in and about the square fronting the palace, not less I think than fifty thousand people. The proceedings within the hall and without were exactly the same. One of the king's ministers began by a speech, which was answered by the Presidents of the respective deputations. Then a Secretary read at length the oath of allegiance; then all the deputies holding up their hands repeated it word by word after him. Another minister then read the list of promotions and royal favors, and the whole closed with three cheers, accompanied by a flourish of martial music and firing of cannon. In the square the immense collection of people were perfectly sober and orderly, and five hundred of our people would have made the air ring with another sort of shout than those which arose from the whole of this multi-

proper; that it was a great error in France not to have adopted such a custom; as it was necessary to command the respect of the people by such representations as strike the senses." *To Abigail Adams*, July 25, 1798. Ms.

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tude. The king himself has no taste for these shows, and does not appear to bear with pleasure his part on them. His dress was an uniform with a small border of silver lace upon the facings, and boots, with the ribband of his highest order over the coat. I never saw him before wear the lace or the ribband. His usual dress is a plain blue uniform with red facings, and without any other ornament than a star.

The day before the ceremony I dined in company with a lady, who said amidst a large collection of persons, that she had come from Leipzig to see it, because we live in an age when such sights were like to become great scarcities; she seemed to speak it with satisfaction, and was applauded by a general smile.

. . . . . .

The circumstance which you mention, proving that your private letters in cypher to the Secretary of State cannot escape the inspection of persons [not] entitled to them, is provoking. Our government (I am ashamed to say it, but it is a lamentable truth), our government has in fact no more retention than a sieve. Everything leaks out, either through treachery, or ungovernable curiosity, or misplaced confidence. There is not the least safety for a man to tell them anything that he is not willing to have proclaimed upon the housetops. I have complained again and again upon the subject, but to no purpose. I now give up the point, take it for granted that secrecy is not understood to be a property of good government with us, and mean to act accordingly.

I am &c.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

[BERLIN,] 14 July, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The English papers last arrived here announced another measure, as of the 1st or 2nd of June, more decisive and more effectual yet than any of the former; a suspension of commercial intercourse with all French territories until the settlement of the differences. I wish it may be true, but neither my letters nor the papers mention such a measure as contemplated.

I hope that their West India Islands will not be forgotten.[1] We can and must do something there. Our newspapers say, that their generals of color are decidedly with us and in case of war will declare for us. Yes, my dear sir, free and independent, in close alliance and under guarantee of United States. With the navy which our enemies are forcing upon us, we can in my opinion unquestionably maintain such a state of things. Those islands will not be English if they can help it, and we ought not to give them away. The natural connection of the West Indies is with the American and not with the European continent, and such a connection as I have in my mind, a more natural connection than that of metropolis and colony, or in other words master and servant. In close alliance, leaving them as to their government totally to themselves, we can protect their independence, furnish them with necessaries, and stipulate for the exclusive carriage of their produce. Think upon this idea which is yet crude and undigested in my mind, and may be unsolid. I know not whether *France* will declare formal war

[1] See *Washington to Timothy Pickering*, July 11, 1798. *Writings of Washington* (Ford), XIV. 34.

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against the government of United States, very probably she may. But she has been *making* war this year and a half, and will certainly not cease it until she has completely ruined us, or until we formally resist. Until she can send her Rapinats to plunder all our property at home, public and private, to place, and displace and replace, at pleasure our future directors and legislators, or until we prove to her that the spirit of freedom and independence is not with us totally extinct, as it is in every part of Europe excepting England.

. . . . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 128 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 16 July, 1798.

SIR:

On the 5th instant I had a private audience of the king and delivered to him my credential letter, which he received with the strongest assurances of satisfaction and his friendly disposition towards the United States. In presenting the letter I took notice, agreeable to your orders, in the usual manner of the decease of the late king and of the accession of his present Majesty to the throne, and in his answer he expressed his sensibility at this mark of attention from the American government.

At the same hour he gave a similar audience to the citizen Sieyès, Envoy Extraordinary from the French Republic, to a minister from the Elector of Bavaria, and to M. de Maisonneuve as minister from Malta, all of whom had been waiting in like manner as myself a longer or shorter time. At the moment when the last was received the government which sent him was no more. You will find by the public prints that on the 12th of last month the Grand Master and

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Island of Malta capitulated to the French force under the command of General Buonaparte.[1]

On the eleventh I delivered to Count Finckenstein, first minister in the department of foreign affairs, a memorial of which I herewith inclose a translation.[2] *I would send at the same time a copy of the original in French, but I do not think it would be prudent to send uncyphered and I have no French cypher with me. You will not judge it material. I hope you will find it exactly conformable to your instructions and intentions. The proposal for abandoning the principle of making free ships cover enemies' property I have repeatedly informed you will not be acceptable; still less will that of a large list of contraband, especially comprehending many of the most material articles of Prussian exports. I have said, however, all that occurs to me as calculated to show that these would be but equitable alterations.*

If these proposals should be accepted, I have mentioned the necessity of some additional articles designating the papers that shall be deemed necessary to prove the neutrality of vessels and their cargoes, and to abuses by the armed vessels of the warring powers. The former treaty mentions the necessity of passports, but leaves their forms unsettled.

I proposed an alteration of the nineteenth article, which appeared to me necessary to render it conformable to the twenty-fifth article of our treaty with Great Britain; a modification of the twentieth, which might otherwise be liable to a collision with the guarantee in our treaty with France. Although this treaty

[1] Count Finckenstein and M. de Maisonneuve expressed their "wonder" that England had not prevented this capture. "England is left alone to fight every battle with a superior enemy. Not a finger is stretched out by any one to assist her, and when the common enemy takes a new stride towards his purpose, all fold their hands in lamentation and wonder that England did not hinder it." Ms. *Diary*, July 13, 1798.

[2] Printed in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 252.

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has in numberless instances been violated by the French government, as it has not been declared by our government formally dissolved, but as they have on the contrary invariably respected it, I thought the stipulation deserved attention.

The twenty-fifth article referred to a future arrangement at the time when consuls should be named. As this nomination had taken place, and no arrangement was made, an alteration of this article became necessary.

I found in our treaty with Spain a precedent for what I proposed, and I believe it is what on our part is conceded alike to all foreign consuls by law. . . .

The French Directory have excluded all American vessels from the port of Havre. They have also passed an *arrêté* ordering all letters found on board of either enemy or neutral vessels captured to be sent to the Minister of Marine and Colonies, who is to lay their contents before them. It is what they had already done with some dispatches for Mr. Murfey [Murray ?]. Mr. Gerry was on the twenty-ninth ultimo still at Paris.

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

[BERLIN,] 17 July, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

The principle upon which your favor of the 10th argues is, I believe, just, though dangerous in practice; it requires extreme caution in its management, and ought to be used at all only by persons of the soundest judgment, the deepest penetration, and the most rigorous self correction.[1] In say-

[1] "Not long since I had the honor of writing to the President, and laid down this idea, which I know perfectly well may be mistaken, viz: that in these times good men must not only exert themselves openly, but must work in the dark, because the Jacobins do so; that good means must be combined and worked in the same

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ing this I need not add, that I feel myself altogether incompetent to act upon it. I am afraid of the first step out of the straight line, afraid of my own resolution to take that step without advancing others, afraid even of reasoning with myself to justify to my own conscience, what I disapprove in the enemies of my cause. Garat tells us that it has been a misfortune of the French revolution that virtuous men have always been obliged to *plot good, as people plot evil.* No wonder, therefore, that they had plotted so much evil under the name of good. Thus far I will agree with you, and it is certainly all that you assert. There are exceptions to every rule of morality, and men may be in situations necessary to act upon such exceptions. But it is not given to every one to judge of these exceptions. Brutus did right in killing Caesar. Yet the act was against the most forcible moral obligations. I approve the conduct of Brutus, but I believe I should not imitate him.

I have written home too upon the subject of Sottin.[1] As to G[erry] I have no idea that he will write anything of the kind. What can you expect from a man who believes that the great Directory were *prejudiced* against the American government, and that the Commissioners if they could

manner as the bad means are, otherwise the last will prevail. . . . Open force might be fairly said to have effected little or nothing for the last three years! The peculiar character of these times is plotting by principles, by bribes, by secret combinations, by letters and books, and by *words*. Ingenuity is not enough exerted to *find out these*. Except the two last, all is profoundly secret. The *second* article cannot be defended on the principles of self-defence even; but unless the men of honor will go into the dark they cannot uncover the villains who work in it." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, July 10, 1798. Ms.

[1] "Of Sottin I had pretty early intelligence and *knew* from excellent authority that he was the principal contriver of the insurrections in Piedmont, and of the conduct of Liguria. Of course, as soon as I heard of his appointment, which was I think the last week in June, I wrote immediately to the Secretary of State a short letter solely on him and on Garnier's appointment." *Ibid.*

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obtain a hearing would remove their prejudices. I do not think G[erry] would tell them as Monroe did, that they might kick and cuff us *ad libitum*, and we would take it with pleasure if it were of any advantage to them; but he would have us take the kicking and cuffing, and tell them we were sorry to see them so angry.

I think you must be mistaken about Y.[1] Bellamy must be the man; his defence itself seems irresistibly to prove him so, for it fixed irremovably upon him an odium which he wishes apparently to escape. What he acknowledges demonstrates what he denies, and why should he gratuitously concede what is tantamount to his own conviction, when he might truly deny all?

Z, or Hauteval, I knew very well when long since the establishment of the French Republic he called himself Monsieur le Comte d'Hauteval. I was present at the performance of Mass after the head of Louis 16 was cut off, at which the said Hauteval thundered out the "Domine salvum fac regem" with as much devotion and enthusiasm, as if he had been ready to suffer martyrdom for the cause. I know not how many million of livres he assured us he had lost by the revolt of the blacks at St. Domingo. He had been a member of the Colonial Assembly at St. Marc in that island, when there was a double assembly. For the same system he had been obliged to fly the island. Such I knew him in 1793. The next I heard of him was in Paris, at the close of the year 1796, when and where he told an American gentleman, who told me, that he, Hauteval, had been trying to make interest to get appointed Minister of France to the

[1] "Y is Haudville, I think; living with Talleyrand, his known man of confidence, and his reputed natural son. Never was a triumph more complete than ours in this whole affair. . . . X, *entre nous*, is a Mr. Hottinger, a Swiss, naturalized, and no more an American than Talleyrand is, who was naturalized and took the oath." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, July 10, 1798. Ms.

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United States, and that shortly before he should have been appointed to succeed Adet, if he could have raised the sum of money necessary for distribution to the ministers of external relations and of marine and colonies. This is the gentleman who is now so tenderly alive to the suspicion of being an intriguer. Perhaps you know the man yourself, but if you do not, these anecdotes may account for his concern in the *great* negotiation. Probably he had not abandoned his project of going as Minister to America, and he might think himself in the line of procuring the necessary distribution money. There was indeed nothing material against him in the dispatches, but his explanatory letter to Talleyrand is nearly as mean, though more cautious than the defence of Bellamy. He too is a citizen of United States, and first ventured into France only as such. Of X, or Hottinger, I know nothing. But I do not think our triumph in this business yet complete enough. X ought to tell us his story. And the Chevalier *d'A[raujo]* should let us into some particulars of his acquaintance with Bellamy. I cannot get here the *Chronique Universelle* containing young Dedem's letter. The *Moniteur* entirely changes its complexion by an artful etc. Meyer I see has complained against it, and the Secretary of the Directory answers that it was published to prove the incorruptibility of the French government.[1] . . .

Always yours.

[1] On July 9 intelligence was sent to Murray that Dupont de Nemours, who had left America with Volney and others because of the passage of the alien act, had landed at Bordeaux on the 3d, twenty-eight days from New York, bringing intelligence that American armed public ships had been despatched with orders to take and bring in all French cruisers near the coast, and that a measure had passed the House of Representatives for suspending all intercourse with France and her possessions. Warnings, premature but wise, were at once given to American vessels then in the Dutch ports, and the authorities sounded upon the extent to which they would act upon the embargo that the French government had declared. The reply was pacific, but not wholly reassuring, as the Dutch were completely under the

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

[BERLIN,] 22 July, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I have so often given you my opinion as to the fate of Europe, all Europe without any exception, that to repeat it would only be to disgust you. The precise term of its agony I shall not undertake to designate, but I think it cannot last many years.

We shall undoubtedly to a certain degree be involved in its fate. I see great events and great suffering preparing for our country. Of this, however, I have no doubt. We shall live through them. We shall never be vanquished. We may be, we probably shall be, for a time humbled. We may be made partially subservient, and worse than all we may be divided. But we must, there is no alternative, we must become a warlike people. France is forcing upon us a navy, and I wish that all or nearly all our regular public force may take that direction. Our people have many prejudices and much ignorance which must be removed and that speedily. If they once take a deep root, they will tear

thumb of the French. Rufus King wrote to Murray: "One of my friends writes to me thus. '*No public officer ever stood higher in the confidence and affections of his country than the President does, whose firm and manly tone of conduct has regenerated all our revolutionary character and placed us on an eminence from whence we can behold with safety the machinations of France.*' So irresistible has been the current of public opinion that within a fortnight past it has broken down the opposition in Congress. An important bill, which authorizes the seizing of French privateers found upon our coasts, passed a few days since *without opposition!* and yesterday we received accounts from Philadelphia that a bill suspending all intercourse with France and her dependencies until the adjustment of our differences, passed the committee of the whole in the House of Representatives without debate! and no doubt is entertained that it will become a law!" Murray thought this latter measure would throw the French West Indies into chaos and negroism.

It was this embargo that was suspended, as some said, as a present to Logan.

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from us every weapon of defence, and leave us forever the helpless victims of any nation that would please to conquer us.

There is one point upon which we have committed many great errors, and concerning which we are yet perpetually committing them. It is in confounding the principles of internal government with those of external relations. We have given a great portion of what Mr. Locke calls the federative power to the legislative department, though he and all the great writers upon government down even to Rousseau say that it belongs properly to the executive. We suppose the principles adopted for the establishment of our civil liberty extend to our political concerns. We dread the force of the executive power at home, and leave it therefore without any power to withstand force from abroad. It is not many years since a member of Congress, and a very good man too, told me that he rejoiced at the French revolution, because it would prove to the world that men were susceptible of being governed by *reason alone*. He has changed his mind, and so have many others, but the change must be more general. There must be force for the government of mankind, and whoever in this world does not choose to fight for his freedom, must turn Quaker or look out for a master.[1]

. . . . . .

[1] "The *Rédacteur*, the Directory's official paper, says that the bill for suspending intercourse with France is astonishing even to those who know the *great* and *secret motive*, which actuated the majority of the House of Representatives in passing it. An insinuation of bribery. It says that they hereby deprive their fellow citizens of a commerce which constituted thirty-six out of fifty-one millions of their exports in the year 1797. This calculation you know is ridiculous, but they take it from a speech of Mr. Giles. But nothing could be more dreaded than this regulation. For the love of independence, of liberty, of virtue, of every thing dear to American hearts, let it be carried into strict and vigorous execution. It is their only part deeply vulnerable by us. It is the only spring by which we can bring them to reason or justice." *To Abigail Adams*, 25 July, 1798. "I hope and trust in God that

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

[BERLIN,] 11 August, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

On my return from Potsdam, where I made a tour of four days, I found your favors of the 2nd and 3rd instants. On the same day I found in the *Rédacteur* Talleyrand's letter of 24th Messidor [July 12] and the postscript to G[erry],[1] and in the Hamburg papers a translation of the message upon General Marshall's arrival, with the letters that accompanied it.[2] Talleyrand's letter to Gerry, intimating with such ineffable insolence the *propriety* and *utility* of Pinckney's and Marshall's departure from the French territories, is dated the *third of April.* On that very day they were amply avenged. Oh! The thought was soothing to my soul. At the very moment when he was tracing the insulting lines and exulting in the idea of pouring humiliation upon honor and virtue, the irrefragable proofs of his own corruption and venality were unfolding to the world from the letters of those same persons, and burning into the grain of public opinion in characters that never will perish but with his own worthless name.

I have not seen nor heard otherwise than from you of G[erry']s answer to the letter of 24 Messidor, or Talleyrand's

their *surprise* (which I believe real and sincere) at our resistance will be very much increased; that it will lead them to the conclusion that they have been mistaken in the opinion, that we are a base pusillanimous people, stupid enough to be duped by the shallowest artifice, and mean enough to yield to the vilest extortion. The transition is natural from surprise to a sense of error. If they will take this second step and one more not less necessary from the sense of error to its reparation, all will yet be well, and we shall again be friends. If not —." *To William Vans Murray*, July 28, 1798. Ms.

[1] The Talleyrand-Gerry letters are in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, III. 218.

[2] *Ibid.*, 199. The message was dated May 21, 1798.

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reply. But I agree entirely with you in opinion of the views they now have relative to us. They see and are convinced, that by holding the *tone* which they have done hitherto, they weaken their own cause in America and strengthen that of the government. They see that our people are not yet prepared to hear of loans and contributions with temper and patience. They *feel* that unless they can disarm our government, they must see all their West India colonies fall to England, or at least from them, and they begin to perceive that neither their bullying nor their violence tends to disarm our government. But they have not a sentiment more amicably disposed than before. They are still determined upon making a revolution in our government, and upon making it *by a war*. Their present conduct is nothing but a specimen of their diplomatic skill to throw the blame of the rupture upon our government.

A proof of this is apparent in the very ground that Talleyrand takes with Gerry, and in insisting to negotiate with him when he had no powers, and did not even consider himself as having any. The commission was *joint* and *several*. But to suppose that it implied thereby the right of the Directory to reject and send away two of its members, to concenter the whole powers in the third, is absurd. The argument carries perfidy as well as insult in its face.

Pichon[1] tells you that the objection to the two Commis-

[1] A full account of the interviews with Pichon is given in Murray's letters to John Adams, printed in *Works of John Adams*, VIII. 680.

"In my long conference with P[ichon] he avoided crimination. I had a fortnight before checked him on that score. I used none except as far as an absolutely free exposure of the injustice, insults, etc., etc., offered us amounted to it. I stated my own disapprobation of the sojourning of our Envoys, told him I had urged them to be decisive in the autumn. He recurred to the President's speech as a very grievous thing. I laughed at it as sheer pretence, and quoted Le Peau's speech 4 November. He admitted it was wrong. I told him that that had contributed much to rouse the people of America, and that I had felt it so strongly that I wrote a

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sioners was *personal*, because Pinckney had been before rejected by an intrigue, and Marshall was considered as unfriendly. The objection to Pinckney is curious. "We will not have him because we have treated him ill." *Our* laws tell us that no one can avail himself of his own wrong. In the case of Mr. Marshall it is equally unfounded. France acknowledges no such reasoning towards herself. The other day she sent Sieyès here. This government objected to him as an unfriendly and obnoxious man. The Directory insisted, because no *specific* objection was made, and Sieyès was received.

Upon this subject you will find the President has declared his determination never to send another minister to France without assurances that he will be received and respected as he ought to be. This resolution I am convinced will not be broken by him. However, as France after rejecting all negotiation for two years has all of a sudden become so zealous for it, I believe there will be no objection to it on our part. Everything possible to avoid a war. We shall always be ready, therefore, to negotiate, but God forbid that we should relax one particle of our defensive exertions while we treat.

The person arrived at Hamburg with letters from Mr. Jefferson, etc., is a Dr. Logan, a Philadelphia Jacobin.[1] He

small pamphlet against Le Peau, but could not get it published. I had done so, and went to Leyden and read it to Mr. Luzac, whose patience was *so satisfied* that he said he could not publish it. Indeed he could not, and no one I believe in this country would have done it." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, August 3, 1798. Ms.

[1] "One circumstance I will tell you in confidence, I mean not strict, which has appeared so important to me that I have written it to Colonel P[ickering] in a private letter. I was a few days since shown a confidental letter (official) from Hamburgh. In it it was said as a matter of great pleasure '*a Mr. Droghan has just arrived here from the U. S. on his way to Paris. He brings letters to M. de La Fayette to Merlin and Talleyrand, from Mr. Jefferson and others, with the hope of*

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pretended to have dispatches from the government, but would not see Pitcairn. He was at first refused a passport to Paris by the French agent at Hamburg, but upon showing certain letters immediately received one.[1] Hichborn too has arrived at Hamburg, and I suppose gone on to Paris. A correspondence of our Jacobins with France has been denounced by Messrs. Thatcher and Harper.

The speech of Lepeaux which you mention (of 4 November), I have never seen, and know not what it is. The period was while I travelled in coming here, and I saw no newspapers. But the speech of Barras is enough — and the refusal to receive General Pinckney at the same time. 'Twas an intrigue, was it? And because all these things were the result of intrigue, a free and spirited nation must submit to them all without a murmur, and be told that every provocation comes from her part. . . .

Faithfully yours.

averting war between France and the U. S.'! So it is you see. This Mr. D. of whom I never heard, is thus, *if this intelligence be correct*, a Deputy from the *United Americans*, who brings his 'Erin go brah' and his calumet to be offered at the shrine of the Directory. I have thought it possible that the name *may* be D. Rohan, the Irish Patriot, if he is *D.* R.; as it was spelt, it was Drohan or Droghan. If this be so, their tone will rise, unless Mr. J. and others have been *reduced*, and consider peace as the only means of the salvation of their party." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, August 2, 1798. Ms. Dr. Logan carried certificates of his citizenship from Chief Justice McKean and Jefferson, and letters from the French consul, Letombe, to Merlin and Talleyrand. Jefferson's account of his relations with Logan are given in a letter to Gerry, January 26, 1799, printed in *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford), VII. 326.

[1] Logan applied to Lafayette, who used his influence with the French agent at Hamburg and obtained a passport. Logan left Hamburg July 28, and arrived in Paris August 7, only to find that Gerry had left the city.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

14 August, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

Logan is the man to whom Monroe used to write his narratives for publication in Bache's paper.[1] His mission at this time is curious, but perhaps not so very important as our anxiety would naturally conjecture. His letters to La Fayette would be of little avail, or rather would tend to injure him with the others.

I think it probable with you that he is to urge arguments against a war. Dupont has already given the cue. The patriots of America fear that a war would increase the British influence, and Talleyrand's last letter shows that this is the system adopted.

But the negotiations of Logan, or of any other under Jefferson or McKean,[2] must all tend to prevent our obtaining satisfaction; to prevent any arrangement which can give credit to our government, of course, they negotiate against their country, and the *man of the people* would lament the day of restitution or indemnity to our plundered merchants as the day of his ruin.

Old fashioned moralists would pronounce harshly upon this species of treason. But *principia non homines* — what signify some hundreds of merchants ruined to preserve the union of all representative democratic principles.

There is an *arrêté* of the Directory annulling the commissions of privateers in the West Indies, and restraining the

[1] Monroe occasionally sent copies of his letters to a number of friends, such as Dr. Logan, Aaron Burr, John Beckley, and R. R. Livingston, but not necessarily for publication. A curious note on Logan's "mission" by Monroe, prepared early in 1799, is in *Writings of Monroe*, III. 155*n*.

[2] Thomas McKean (1734–1817), chief justice of Pennsylvania, and governor of the state, 1799 to 1808.

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power of granting such commissions for the future. It contains some precious confessions relative to past plunderings.[1]

A firm and steady hand; an undaunted and persevering spirit; we want nothing else, and we shall issue victorious from the struggle. All must depend upon our next House of Representatives, but if the negro keepers will have French democracy — I say let them have it.[2]

Most heartily yours.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

August 15, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I do not expect that your advice to P[ichon] about L[ogan] will have much effect. The French government will never abandon the system of combining with *oppositions* in foreign countries. It is not a system of particular time or place, it was always pursued by France as a monarchy in Holland, in Sweden, in England, when she could; in short everywhere with governments where there was faction. Since France has become a republic she has continued the practice everywhere, and by it overthrown every republic in Europe. It is founded much in the nature of things. I hope your mentioning the matter to P[ichon] will have the effect you intended, and not that of putting them more *on their guard*. L[ogan] has, if I am rightly informed, (and you know it still better,) been very indiscreet, and conducted

[1] See *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 222.

[2] "If after what has happened Virginia and all south hang still as a dead weight upon the union, and retain their predilections for French democracy and fraternity, I am afraid they too will be cured only by having the druggist's shop pass through them. It will work them more harshly than it has the Batavians." *To William Vans Murray*, August 4, 1798. Ms.

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in a manner calculated to blow himself up.[1] I hope he will not get advice to be more prudent. But I look upon H[ichborn] as a man ten times more dangerous than L., because he is cool, deliberate and thorough-paced. He gives out at Hamburg that he has business in Holland, where I suppose you may soon see him. I know not whether you have any acquaintance with him, but at all events beware of him. He is no fanatic, for in his heart the circle of nature can produce no object other than himself. He has always been hostile to the Federal government, though pretending in general to be its friend. . . .

[1] Murray sought to have Logan "summoned" before the municipality, to state who he was, whence he came, whither going, and on what business. The machinery of administration worked too slow to effect this purpose, but Murray learned from Logan by an intermediary much that he wished to know: that he was upon a party mission, to inform Talleyrand that a war between America and France would destroy republicanism in the United States; that the government was British in sympathy, but he did not think the British party would long continue to be powerful; that he was anxious to get to Paris and recall Gerry. Murray did not succeed in securing the arrest of the Doctor, but he told Pichon of this informal envoy, of his former denunciation of Talleyrand, and of the folly of looking to Logan's party for any healing of the breach, instead of to the government.

"No, I *think* I was right. I foresaw that Logan's mission would be soon so *notorious* that P[ichon] would know that I knew it. By telling him I told him of the vengeance of the American government if Logan were treated with, and also of the opinions of *that party* of Talleyrand to whom he is devoted. It has failed. They do secretly receive him, and Logan abuses our government, and says the *nations are against it!* because of the severities of Mr. A[dams]. Here is a traitor without legal treason. Such language ought to be treason, if held in any foreign country." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, August 24, 1798. Ms.

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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

[TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 22 August, 1798.

SIR:

As nearly six weeks have elapsed since I delivered to Count Finckenstein the memorial relative to the renewal of the commercial treaty, of which I have heretofore sent you a copy, and I had received no answer, I called yesterday upon Count Haugwitz, the only minister of the department now in town, to inquire of him when I might expect it. He told me that upon objects of this nature, the usual course of affairs in this government required a reference to the departments of Finance and Commerce and to the great Directory, a sort of council composed of all the principal ministers of all the great departments. That this reference of my memorial had been made, and he hoped in the course of a short time to send me an answer. That the observations in the memorial in support of the alterations proposed had great weight, and so far concurred with the sentiments and dispositions of this government, that I might be assured there would be little difficulty in coming to an agreement upon these points. This declaration was very explicit. But I still believe when it comes to the drawing up of the articles, difficulties will be started of which there is nothing now hinted.

I then told him that I had received an answer from you, concerning the subject of the first conversation I had held with him, relative to the decree of the French legislature against all neutral navigation. That the decree was viewed by the American government in the same light as he had considered it at that time, and that it was one of the principal causes that had contributed to produce the situation in

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which the United States and France stand towards each other, which, though not yet a state of positive war, was very near it. That the last letters of the French minister of external relations to Mr. Gerry before his departure were full of professions of a disposition and desire for conciliation. That as mere professions they would have no influence at all upon the American government. But if they were accompanied by any act proving their sincerity, they would still meet with a most cordial wish for peace on our part. But that unless that decree was repealed it appeared to me that every pretence of a disposition for conciliation must be considered as groundless and intended to deceive. I asked him whether this government had received any answer to the representation which they had ordered to be made against that decree? He said they had; that they were assured it would not be carried into execution against their vessels, and that it had in fact not been; that at present they had no reason to complain of the French upon this point, and he had hoped they were coming in general to a system more consistent with the rights of neutral nations, and particularly with regard to the United States. That Sieyès had within these few days communicated to this government a copy of the late *arrêté* of the Directory, recalling the commissions of the privateers in the West Indies, and prescribing for the future to them to confine themselves within the bounds of the laws. That he had accompanied this communication with a note in which he gave as a reason for making it, the desire of the Directory to convince his Majesty of their *moderation*. That the United States whose interests this measure principally concerned were the best judges how far the measure was really evincive of the Directory's moderation, but as the subject did not immediately concern the Prussian interests, he presumed the communication was

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made because the Directory did justice to the sentiments of friendship which this country bears to that of the United States. He added that the whole conduct of the American government was such as must command the esteem and ought to obtain the friendship of all other nations, and he heartily wished that of France would take it for their model, as it would be happier for themselves and make them much better neighbors.[1]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO SYLVANUS BOURNE

BERLIN, 31 August, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of the 24th instant, with the letter inclosed from Paris, and am much obliged to you for both, as well as for your kind inquiries concerning Mrs. Adams's health. It is now pretty well restored, and I beg you to accept my cordial congratulations upon the recovery of Mrs. Bourne.

I wish I could perceive in the conduct of the French government any proofs of that disposition for peace and con-

[1] "The arrival of Kosciuszko at Paris (in violation of his parole) has alarmed the Russian cabinet. Here it is said to be a thing of no consequence. It is a little singular that Kosciuszko should have left America under the disguise of a fictitious name, and unknown to the public. A Philadelphia newspaper of 16th June speaks of him as then in Virginia taking the benefit of the springs. La Marque's letter from Bayonne announces his arrival there the 10th Messidor, or 28 June, so that on the 16th he could not have been in the United States. His disguise was I suppose to serve him in case of capture by the English, in which case he might have been delivered up. I suppose that according to the new doctrines, a word of honor given to a tyrant and under duress of imprisonment is not binding; yet he was ashamed to avow his own act, and denies that he gave his parole. A lie, to cover a breach of honor. Poor Kosciuszko!" *To William Vans Murray*, August 28, 1798. Ms.

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ciliation which they with so much apparent earnestness now profess. The renunciation of demands for loans and apologies, if it has been really made, may be considered so far as an advance towards justice. But the pretension still maintained by implication even in Talleyrand's last letter to Mr. Gerry, of receiving or refusing any future envoy from the United States, according to the opinion of the *French* government as to his *advantages*, is inadmissible, and an effectual bar to any such mission from America. Talleyrand knew this perfectly well when he wrote the letter. It is a pretension totally inconsistent with our rights as an independent nation; a pretension in substance to choose our ministers to France; a pretension full of insolence as well as of injustice. This is not the conduct of conciliation. Still less so is the reception of Dr. Logan, an avowed enemy of the American government, sent by others of its avowed enemies, and who publicly declares that the American people are against their own government, and feeds the hopes of the Directory upon that division in the United States, which has so long been their chief dependence. I believe the American government and people will be not more easily duped by fawning artifice than they were terrified by hectoring menaces. Let them make the most of their Dr. Logan and his constituents; I thank God there is a spirit in our country that will not sink under domestic treachery any more than under foreign hostility.[1]

[1] "About a fortnight since Doctor Logan, the great apostle of democratic liberty in Pennsylvania, called on me on his way to Paris as the minister plenipotentiary of that party to the Great Nation. It seems I am indebted for the honor of this visit to Mr. Porcupine [William Cobbett], who (as you know) undertook to dub me with the title of Democrat, and which the good Doctor believing came to me and stated to me without reserve the secrets of the cabinet, informing me of his having certificates and letters from J[efferson], McKean and La Tombe to Talleyrand, Merlin, Fayette and others; and I carried my duplicity so far (tho' the first

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Your observations upon the other *apparent concessions* and real new aggressions are all perfectly just. The truth is, that the French government have hitherto felt a great contempt for us as a nation. They have disdained our friendship and despised our enmity. In the first underhand negotiations with our commissioners these sentiments appear in the most unequivocal colors. Yet these negotiations failed, and their exposure has fixed a stain too deep for the wretched chalk-rubbing of Talleyrand or his tools to take out.

This intrigue has recoiled upon its authors with such violence that even Talleyrand has been compelled to sacrifice his own agents, and call an *odious intrigue* proceedings dictated by himself and conducted under his express direction.

This is not the only instance in which they have begun to think us not quite so contemptible as they had imagined. Yet they still heartily despise us, and think to treat us like a parcel of idiots or children. Great Britain once despised us too. Her contempt cost her dear. It will not be perfectly gratuitous to France. . . .

With best respect &c.

time in my life I ever wore a Janus face,) that he promised to write me from Paris, what progress *our plan* made, and what prospects of peace might present thro his agency in *our cause*, etc., etc. But I suspect that on enquiring at Paris he has found reasons to believe that Porcupine has deceived him, for notwithstanding his cordial promises, I have not a line from him. . . . I had almost forgot to mention that another envoy from the North in B. Hichborn (of noted memory), has arrived at Hambro, on his way to Paris. I think we may soon look for General [James] Jackson from Georgia, and the mission will be complete from north, south and middle States." *Sylvanus Bourne to John Quincy Adams*, Amsterdam, August 24, 1798. Ms.

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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

[TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 3 September, 1798.

SIR:

I received last evening your favor of July 9, inclosing a copy of your letter dated 25 June to Mr. Gerry. I presume he did not receive it previous to his sailing from Havre on the 8th of last month. He was chased into Spithead by a British armed vessel, and sailed again from that place about the 18th. Doubtless before this letter can reach you he will have arrived in America, and given an account of the termination of his negotiations.

Within a very few days after his departure arrived at Hamburg a Dr. Logan, who as I hear gave himself out as sent with a pacific mission to the French government from the United States. He proceeded through Amsterdam to Paris, where he has had several interviews with the minister Talleyrand, and, it is added, with the Director Merlin. He was the bearer of letters recommendatory from Mr. Jefferson and Mr. M'Kean.

The *Moniteur* states this business thus:

> That notwithstanding the hostile proceedings of the American government, the patriotic party in that country, with Mr. Jefferson at their head, sensible that a rupture between the two Republics would only turn to the benefit of England, had sent a citizen equally attached to his country and grateful towards France; that this messenger of peace has already had several conferences with the minister of external relations, and that it is reported the Directory have as a pledge of their pacific dispositions raised the embargo, which they had laid upon American vessels in the French ports.

Doctor Logan openly declares that the recent measures of the American government are the work only of the

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English party, and that they are much disapproved by the people.[1]

I have a letter from Mr. Gerry, dated on the day of his departure from Havre, in which he says that the aspect of affairs on this side the Atlantic is now *very pacific*, and he hopes to find it so on the other. The reception of Dr. Logan is the best comment upon the pacific dispositions of the Directory. In this, as in every other of their late acts, I can see nothing pacific, but on the contrary an hostility more and more inveterate, thinly disguised under professions of moderation and friendship.[2]

. . . . . .

I have the honor &c.

[1] See *Logan to Merlin*, September 9, 1798, in *Memoir of Dr. George Logan*, 129. In the same volume (p. 89) will be found Logan's defence, printed in January, 1799.

[2] "P[ichon] goes to Paris in a few days. I understood as much from him the other night as that he had been sent here to work with me; that La Forest, late joint commissioner with Fauchet, (vid. Fauchet's No. 10) being given to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, his being sent here, and the whole of the American affair being entirely surrendered since the middle of June to Mr. T[alleyrand], are all evidences that they are sincere, and that things will be brought to a friendly conclusion, if we will but enter upon negotiation. I told him, on his telling me this, to wit, that all the papers which he had lent to me, and all that he had said upon the intentions of the French government, he had said by order of his government; that as I had often told him, I had no authority to speak with him or any one on this subject, but that I had seized the opportunity which his correspondence with the Minister afforded of incessantly and candidly displaying the only principles upon which the peace could be secured and war averted; that I had wished to open the eyes of his government by convincing him of certain truths respecting America before it was too late, but had done this without order or suggestion from any one. He said that a great change had taken place in the mind of his government on American affairs, that it was now clear to them that they had been deceived by men who meddled on both sides of the water. . . . He stated over and over as he had often done, the interests which France had in not going to war with us, — loss of colonies, junction with England, future fortune of America as a powerful nation, in fact the sweetest flattery to my ears in developing the power and fortunes of America! urging, pressing a negotiation." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, August 31, 1798. Ms.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

4 September, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

You will undoubtedly have seen before this the letter of General Washington accepting the command of the army, and been charmed, though not surprised, at the firmness with which the hero comes forward again in the cause of his country.[1]

I have a letter from the Secretary of State of 9 July, with a copy of his *last* letter of recall to Gerry. The Secretary mentions an act passed on the day when he wrote, authorizing our public armed vessels to capture "armed French vessels, which shall be found within the jurisdictional limits of the United States or *elsewhere on the high seas*." He adds, the same powers are now extended to *private* armed vessels, which the President is authorized to commission for that purpose, and that a number were waiting for such commissions which would be issued the next day.

The rest of his intelligence I shall not mention, because you will certainly hear it from other quarters. The treaties with France are dissolved forever.[2] The poor fools, who proposed last winter that in the new treaty France should be put *exactly upon the same footing with England*, may now discover at their leisure how much they would thereby have resigned of advantage to themselves. The temper of our people continues excellent, and G[erry']s dishwater pacifics will not arrive in season to suit the public palate.

The penalties of treason will very soon make Mr. Logan and his employers more considerate, or dispose of them and their negotiations. I know not how far their present conduct is grounded upon expectation of support in our country.

[1] *Writings of Washington* (Ford), XIV. 37.

[2] Act approved by the President, July 7, 1798.

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If they have any ground for strong support, the mission of Logan is the gauntlet of civil war. I have been endeavoring as coolly as possible to consider it in this point of view, and have made up my mind upon the subject. If it be so — *the gauntlet must be taken up.*[1]

Yours.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

14 September, 1798.

. . . The accounts from home continue to discover a spirit truly worthy of the American name, a spirit which I earnestly hope may support itself in all its vigor through the severe trial which it must undergo, and which if thus supported will beyond all doubt carry us triumphantly through all the dangers and difficulties, which weak and wicked men have brought upon us.

You cannot well imagine how much the attitude which our government and people have taken has raised them in the opinion of the European world. Out of France and the circle of French fanaticism, the clear and unequivocal voice of Europe declares that in this contest we are right and France is wrong. Our forbearance and long suffering under

[1] "The regulation relative to prizes, and the spirit which appeared in it, had already occurred to me as extraordinary. It is evident from your account that it will end only in redoubled mortification to our Batavian friends.

"Pichon may tell you what he will about a change in the minds of his government. They receive and treat with Logan. As you have a copy of the *arrêté* raising the embargo upon American vessels in their ports, it has probably taken place. Their public papers all impute it as a compliment to Logan's mission, and we know that all their papers, anarchical or otherwise, (if others there be,) are under the controul of the Directory. These facts compared with Pichon's assertions, prove that *no* change of system has taken place. By the last accounts I have from Philadelphia (to 17 July) it appears that Pichon himself carries on a very suspicious correspondence with Bache." *To William Vans Murray*, September 8, 1798. Ms.

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accumulated injuries and insults were well known, and had in some degree countenanced an idea that was gaining ground, that we should sink unresisting and submissive to that yoke of tyranny and oppression, which bears so heavily upon the greatest part of Europe. That we too should receive constitutions ready made from Paris under the name of the rights of man; should have the members of our Directory prescribed to us, and appointed, dismissed, replaced, and again turned off, as the paroxysms of Rewbell's infirmities should increase or abate; should have French generals to dictate our laws, and French agents to dispose of our public treasures, and amidst the most burthensome contributions and insupportable depredations, sing paeans of gratitude to the great nation and her glorious warriors. The French newspapers made no scruple of announcing that a revolution would soon overthrow the American government, and place the affairs of the United States in the hands of patriots devoted to France; and it was freely intimated that the influence of France would be liberally employed to promote this desirable effect, the arguments were doubtless preparing, which have been publicly avowed to justify the robbery of the public treasures of Switzerland for application in America. But the tone is now totally changed, and the signal of the change was the first show of firmness and a determination to resist on the part of our government. Dupont, the ex-consul, arrived at Paris. The newspapers not having yet received their cue announced that Dupont had said, the *American people* were as decided in favor of France as the *American government* was against her, and that this government would fall at the first instant of hostility against it. Dupont soon contradicted this paragraph, and gave it as his opinion, that a rupture would only strengthen the English party and English influence in America, and

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that the true patriots, French and American, wished rather for conciliatory measures on the part of France. From that moment the French government have affected a friendly disposition towards the United States; as long as Mr. Gerry continued in France every letter of Talleyrand to him sunk more and more of its pretensions, and since his departure every opportunity has been seized to spread the opinion that the differences between the United States would soon be amicably settled. At the same time it is true the strongest proofs have appeared that the system is not changed, but only the course of manœuvre; that the deadliest enmity still rages, but only involved in a deeper mask of dissimulation and perfidy. These proofs, however, are not immediately discerned by the world. The public here only perceive the immense alteration of Talleyrand's notes from brutal insolence and rapacious extortion, to courtly complaisance and even humble solicitations; they generally believe that France will now yield every point of controversy, and court a reconciliation as strongly as she before rejected it.

I have said that all this is dissimulation and perfidy, not only because these characters appear evident even in Talleyrand's last letter to Gerry, but because they are yet more unequivocal in the reception and treatment of Dr. Logan, a man who publicly gives himself out as an envoy from the *party* in America opposed to its government. Logan arrived at Hamburg and applied for a passport to the French consul. The passport was at first refused, but afterwards upon his exhibiting his letters from certain American characters was granted. He went through Holland announcing himself everywhere as bearing a public mission from the United States, but avoided seeing Mr. Pitcairn at Hamburg, and Mr. Murray at the Hague. After arriving at Paris he had several interviews with Talleyrand, and with Merlin,

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then President of the Directory. He dined with Merlin, and all these circumstances were formally published in the newspapers, which added that at *his* request the Directory had raised the embargo upon *almost all* the American vessels in the ports of France. But at the same time Talleyrand in an underhand manner intimated to an American public character not far from France, and known to be warmly attached to his own government, that he (Talleyrand) was sorry for Logan's mission and had given no encouragement to it. That he wished him to return to America, and was disposed to negotiate only with the American government.

The embargo is certainly raised upon *all* the American vessels, for the *arrêté* of the Directory raising it is published in the *Rédacteur*[1]; but even this measure still proceeds from the old system of dividing the people from the government, and the *arrêté* itself, while it professes friendship for the people of the United States, is grossly insulting to the government.

But this raising of the embargo and all Mr. Gerry's anodynes with which he will probably soon reach home, are nothing satisfactory to us. The demand of tribute is abandoned; that for an explanation or recantation of the President's speeches is given up. Those insolent preliminaries to negotiation are renounced, and Talleyrand tells Mr. Gerry that any person uniting *his* advantages will be well received from the United States which is reserving the pretence to dismiss and reject again any person who may not exactly suit the Directory. The decree for restraining their privateers in the West Indies within the limits of the laws is, in fact, tantamount to nothing; if it means anything, it must be a confession that heretofore they have countenanced those

[1] It was dated August 16. See *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 229.

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privateers in depredations contrary to the laws, which I have no doubt is true, but which is among the smallest of our numerous injuries. The laws themselves and the decrees of the Directory, which have the force of laws, are the greatest of those injuries, and that of 18th January, or 29 Nivôse last, is altogether incompatible with a state of peace between France and America.

A very recent attempt has been made in the Council of Five Hundred to obtain the repeal of this law. It was on the 31st of last month, of 14 Fructidor. A member of the Council[1] stated at great length its injustice, its impolicy, and its pernicious tendency, even to France itself. He stated as a certain fact that of the whole number of captures made by the French privateers seven-eighths at least were neutral property. He complained that it was contrary to the most indisputable laws of nations, that it far exceeded anything that England had ever done, and that its consequences could only enrich a few privateersmen by the plunder of inoffensive neutrals, while it drew down upon France the universal detestation of all nations. He added that it was upon the point of producing a rupture with America, and that Denmark had declared she would protect her commerce against it by military naval force. Nothing of all this was denied, but one or two members answered, that the repeal of the law would discourage *privateering*, and the English purchased neutral papers by the bale, and upon such arguments as these, the Council passed to the order of the day and left the law in full force.

The situation of the Directory in Europe is at this period such as makes dissimulation and delay with regard to their differences with the United States highly politic. They are threatened with a new combination against them of Austria,

[1] Denis Couzard.

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Russia, Turkey, and Naples, which together with the war they have now upon their hands will furnish them as much employment as they wish.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

18 September, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

Since my last (of the 15th), N. B (not copied), I have yours of the 11th, and I have seen some paragraphs from the French papers stating that Logan's business was rather scientific than political, but that the Directory, *in order to prevent any misunderstanding which could arise from it, had intimated to him the wish that he would return home.* You have observed how ambiguous all this conduct is. There seems to me to be in it something more than ambiguity, there is duplicity and perfidy. If they do not mean to treat with the party, why did they say unequivocally that Logan could have no political business, because he had no authority from his government, and that he was advised to go home to avoid the appearance of an illicit negotiation? Their object now is plain enough, to hang with all their weight to the party, and to make our government believe that they do not, a policy perfectly agreeable to Logan and his constituents. But pray to whom does he carry out propositions? As to his alteration of opinions upon his view of *Holland, Belgium* and *Paris*, I have no faith in it at all. I have often heard of these alleged opinions, but seldom perceived them attended by alteration of conduct. Logan is too far gone to alter his opinions. To such people evidence is nothing. The public opinion and the constables, as you say, they understand no other argument.

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Schimmelpenninck I have always considered as our friend, and a very valuable friend. His first address to Logan was an instance of that open honest candor which peculiarly belongs to him. But it gave L[ogan] his cue. "He did not come to gain the influence of France to a party, but to prevent war." Just as the Irish patriots contended for Parliamentary reform and Catholic emancipation. You saw how the English leaders of opposition swore. Mr. O'Connor[1]! No man in the British dominions could abhor *a party's calling in the French to its assistance* more than he. No! No! Mr. O'Connor's only object was rational reform. An open hearted honest artless man! His principles were the same as those of the English opposition. My dear sir, the treachery of these times carries the impudence of hypocrisy to such a length, as to persist in belying its natural face long after its mask has been torn off in the eyes of all the world. Neither you nor I have believed from the first that Logan came to urge war at the present moment, and it has appeared to me not very material what the *point* which he was to press might be. It is the mission from a party in our country opposed to the government, and his reception as such, that I consider as important. A regular organized faction negotiating with a foreign power, whether for peace or war, is the mischief. That it should act thus openly, avowedly, and even with an affectation of publicity, is in my mind truly lamentable.

I think with you that *now* we can with propriety negotiate upon their giving those *positive assurances*, which Schimmelpenninck thinks them so ready to give. We now stand fully upon the defensive, and can proceed in our measures *until the issue of* the negotiation, a circumstance which would undoubtedly shorten and facilitate it very much. But

[1] Arthur O'Connor, a United-Irishman.

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while negotiating, we must not slacken for a single moment until the law of 29 Nivôse shall be repealed, and our rights of neutrality are completely restored.

. . . . . .

Yours most faithfully.

TO JOHN ADAMS

25 September, 1798.

My Dear Sir:

. . . . . .

The present situation of the affairs of France, however, combining with the spirit which she at length finds roused in the United States, have produced a great and important change in her conduct towards us. It is no longer an overbearing and insolent minister of external relations, who keeps three ministers waiting five months without reception, and, after attempting to dupe and swindle them by his pimping spies, insults us by a discrimination injurious to the rights of an independent nation, and disgraceful to the objects of his choice. No longer a self-imagined conqueror, dictating apologies and prescribing tribute as the preliminaries to hearing for claims of justice. In proportion as our spirit of resistance has become manifest, theirs of oppression and extortion has shrunk back. Even Mr. Gerry returned home with a full persuasion that the dispositions in France towards us were altogether pacific. That gentleman unfortunately was not qualified for negotiation with such men as now govern France. He was charmed with words; he was duped by professions; he had neither the spirit nor the penetration absolutely necessary for dealing with adversaries at once so bold, so cunning, and so false. Since his departure they have redoubled their pretences of moderation and peaceable dispositions. They have totally changed their system of con-

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duct but their purposes remain the same. The manner in which they received Doctor Logan, who made no scruple to give himself out as the envoy of the French party in America; and the manner in which they wished to blind our government by a pretence of not having received him, will be known to you more directly than from hence. You will judge from what motives such a species of duplicity could proceed. They are at present very industrious in spreading abroad the idea that they wish reconciliation with the United States, and are extremely desirous of a new negotiation. All this for the present is probably nothing more than a design to lull us into security, and especially to divide the people of the United States from their government. They have discovered by their arrogance, and indignities, and pretended contempt of our friendship, they have only weakened their own party in America, and given strength and vigor to the friends of government. But at the same time they have seen our people grasp at every shadow of conciliation, and cling to every transient semblance of peace, with such ardor and anxiety, that they now think it sufficient to damp all that energy which has surprised them by its unexpected appearance, if they affect a desire of returning friendship.

All this, however, will be deemed mere artifice while they continue to violate the rights of neutrality; a mere lullaby to keep us inactive and defenceless, until they shall have more leisure to point their whole force against us. As long as there is no offer of indemnity for past depredations or security against the future, we should be worse than idiots to trust their professions at a time when we know them contradicted by their conduct. The law of 29 Nivôse remains yet in full force. A recent attempt was made in the Council of Five Hundred to obtain its repeal. Its injustice and pernicious tendency were demonstrated in their full

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extent. But it was answered that the repeal would discourage the privateers, and that the English could purchase neutral papers by the load. The Council passed to the order [of the] day, and refused the common advantage of publication to the speech of the member who moved the repeal (Couzard). The *Moniteur*[1] gave this speech in such a mutilated manner that its author openly declared the misrepresentation, and nothing further was done upon a subject in which Couzard himself proved in his speech France was violating the most sacred laws of nations and making herself enemies of every people.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 136 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 1 October, 1798.

SIR:

I have the honor to inclose herewith a copy of a note from the Department of Foreign Affairs here in answer to mine of 11 July, with proposals for the renewal of the treaty which has heretofore been forwarded to you.[2]

[1] In suggesting to Murray that he send to America the French journals Adams writes of the *Moniteur:* "It is the most uniformly lying paper that I ever met with. It should make a small change in its title, and call itself the *Menteur*. For the last six months I have not met with a paragraph in it, with the subject matter of which I had any knowledge, but it contained a lie or a misrepresentation. All its statements concerning the United States are ridiculously false, and I know almost every one of its accounts under the date of Berlin to be false. Most of them in both cases are malicious." September 18, 1798. Ms.

[2] Printed in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 253. The reply of the American minister, dated October 29, is in the same volume, p. 256.

"Mr. Asp, the Swedish envoy, told me yesterday, as he said in confidence, that our treaty would not be renewed, but that Sweden would regulate the duties on our trade by those imposed by us on theirs. As I know nothing respecting your

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The objections to the changes which conformably to your instructions, I proposed, are those which I have constantly expected and frequently announced. But from the closing sentence it is apparent they wish for delay. Their motives are undoubtedly the same with those which have hitherto suspended, and will continue to suspend, an answer from Sweden. The fear of giving offence to France.

I shall reply to this note as soon as possible; but if you do not think it advisable to renew the stipulation for making the bottom cover the property, and for excepting at least ship timber from the list of contraband, I have no sort of expectation that either treaty will be renewed. At present I consider myself as expressly forbidden from acceding to their proposal for renewing the 12th article as it is, and have no idea that they will consent to leave it out.

I have the honor &c.

progress in this negotiation, I cannot judge whether this measure is in consequence of mutual arrangement, or is likely to impede your negotiation." *Rufus King to John Quincy Adams*, London, October 26, 1798. Ms.

"It may not be amiss to observe to Mr. Adams, that he need not be solicitous about his success in making treaties with Prussia and Sweden at present; that I am fully convinced, as he is, that both will affect to refuse any treaty upon the terms in his instructions. This will not alarm me at all, and if both powers finally refuse to agree to any stipulations without the articles in contemplation, we shall not be very uneasy. Our commerce is of more consequence to them, than theirs to us; and with or without treaties we shall have all we want. But we should be very improvident, at the moment of being forced into a war, to bind ourselves to permit France and her colonies to be supplied with every thing, even our own produce, in Prussian and Swedish or Danish ships." *John Adams to Timothy Pickering*, September 30, 1798. *Works of John Adams*, VIII. 598.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 2 October, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have your favor of 25th ultimo. My brother left me the day before yesterday.[1] He will probably be at Hamburg by the 7th or 8th, and will then embark for America as soon as possible. I mention this, because you may perhaps be disposed to write to him. I am very much obliged to you for the extracts from Mulciber's [Talleyrand] letters, and fully agree with your opinions expressed to Pichon concerning them. But the reply to your objections at the qualifications hinted as necessary to secure a good reception to a new envoy is very far from satisfactory. We must have no more either of prescription or advice on this point. The caution against any person *pronounced in favor of the English government or of royalty*, if they are to be applied by France, will exclude every man of whom there is any probability that he will be appointed. If upon such an application Pinckney and Marshall were rejected, pray who would be admitted? T[alleyrand] himself represents all the chiefs of our government, and even you, as receiving impressions from the English government. He has very lately insinuated in an insulting manner, that the President was a friend of royalty. All the writers of the Directory have represented the late President both as a tool of the English government, and a friend to royalty. If men like these holding their opinions and acting in their support are meant as the *écueils* to be avoided, who would be left? None but decided enemies to our government, or mawkish, equivocal, neutral characters, fit in these times for the confidence of no man under the sun. T[alleyrand], indeed, gives intimations that he should will-

[1] His position as Secretary of Legation was filled by Thomas Welsh, son of Dr. Thomas Welsh.

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ingly treat with you upon the matter, and I heartily wish the government may authorize you for the purpose. They will see at least that you had not been gulled by fair professions, or charmed by unmeaning decrees against unauthorized pirates. But how can we believe in conciliation, when we see in the *Rédacteur* of 21 September, an insolent and threatening piece calling the Americans *robbers born*, because descended from Englishmen; saying that France will treat us as an English colony, and will not permit our flag to appear upon the European seas? Ridiculous bombast, if you please; but in the official paper where all papers are under executive control, it is at least evidence of intention.

Yours ever.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 137 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 6th October, 1798.

SIR:

. . . . . .

You will hear from Mr. Murray more immediately and earlier than from hence the present proceedings and professions of the French government towards ourselves. From him you will learn that they have received and treated with Dr. Logan, while at the same time they denied it to him, and pretended that they were displeased at Logan's mission. You will perceive what warm and repeated professions they make of pacific and conciliatory dispositions, and will compare their assertions with the indisputable facts so contradictory to them. The minister Talleyrand appears after all not very well satisfied with Mr. Gerry, and intimates plainly that he should have no objection that the negotiation should be renewed by Mr. Murray himself. I know not what may be at present the views of our government,

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but if I might be permitted to give my opinion in the case, I should urgently recommend that Mr. Murray might be authorized to continue these communications and this intercourse, because if there be really a disposition for conciliation on the part of France, there are several points upon which an understanding is essential before any renewal of the ordinary diplomatic relations can be accomplished. Mr. Murray's conduct through all these interviews and correspondencies has, as far as I can judge, been at once spirited and prudent, properly supporting the dignity of our nation and government, and at the same time improving all the possible means of yet preserving peace. He has amply and constantly communicated to me all that has past between him and the confidential agent [Pichon] of M. Talleyrand concerning our affairs, and I have as freely given him my sentiments upon it. . . .

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

6th October, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of 28th ultimo, and in some degree regret the departure of P[ichon], because, though there are evident traces in his transactions with you of that tortuous double and perfidious policy which is inseparable from all Talleyrand's negotiations, there was real information to be obtained through him. He told you that he was convinced that the *positive assurances* ought to be given. Schimmelpenninck thought they would have been given before. I much doubt whether they will yet. T[alleyrand]'s explanation of the *qualification* with which he gave the assurances to Gerry was as bad as the qualification itself — if anything worse. In one of the last *Menteurs* is

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given a part of General Washington's letter to the President, with comments upon the astonishing *partiality* of the General for the English government, which it says is well known.

I doubt even whether it can be admitted that a *suspicion of insincerity* is a lawful ground for refusing to hear ministers of peace. By the laws of nations the right of refusal must rest upon substantial and specific objections, not upon suspicions. Negotiations for peace between nations at war must always be conducted with mutual suspicions of insincerity. And one fact I hope is indubitable. That no negotiation with France will again in any part be entrusted to a man, either belonging to the French faction like Mun[roe], or an admirer of the French revolution like G[erry]. Now as every man of both these descriptions will be most inflexibly excluded, if the Directory mean to negotiate, they must be content to do it with a man of different character and sentiments, with a man at least as partial to the English government as General Washington, and at least as pronounced in favor of royalty as the President. To tell us that the choice of such a man would be a rock in the way, is to shut the door against any negotiation, and to belie every previous profession of a disposition for peace.

. . . . . .

Always yours.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

20th October, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I have duly received your favors of the 9 and 12 instants, with the copy of the letter from Talleyrand.[1] It is certainly unnecessary for me to tell you that no explanation of your

[1] That of 7 Vendémiaire, or September 28, printed in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 239.

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motives in the transactions with P[ichon] could be necessary for me. I have never in any corner of the mind imputed to you any others than the obvious ones, which the proceedings of themselves show, and which you mention. I trust the government will do the same.

I know not what the judgment or determination will be upon the papers which you have now transmitted; but my own opinion would be, to renew the negotiation, and I have so expressed it in my letters. Not, however, immediately by sending a Minister to France.[1] The proper assurances are not given explicitly enough for this, and unless the decree of 29th Nivôse be repealed, there is no foundation for a fair negotiation. The course that I should advise would be, that you should receive authority to confer with any person properly authorized by the French government, and agree upon some basis for a negotiation. You could very soon thus discover, whether their intention is sincerely reconciliation and compensation, or merely to amuse and delay. Upon the result of this should depend the formal restoration of diplomatic intercourse.

This, I say, would be my opinion, founded upon an extreme regard and deference for the wishes of a part of our Union, not upon what I myself think ought to be. After the treatment which we have experienced from France, if my sentiments prevailed, the only negotiation which I should admit would be, a public and solemn mission from them to us. Gerry hinted at it in his correspondence with Talleyrand, who half promised and half declined it, just as he does about

[1] "Whether these overtures . . . should have been accepted, or encouraged, or neglected, are questions not free from doubts. I am inclined to think that *immediate* attention to them was neither necessary not advisable, and that they had not as yet acquired such a degree of maturity as to call for any formal, national act." *John Jay to Benjamin Goodhue*, March 29, 1799. *Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay* (Johnston), IV. 257.

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giving the assurances; haggled, and quibbled, and equivocated, as he does in all his official transactions that we know of. Such very possibly may be the determination of our government, who love the plain downright way of things; but at any rate it is impossible they should mistake your views, or disapprove your conduct in this affair.

The reasons which you conjecture as inducing them to make so much mystery of these proceedings are probably the true ones.[1] But there may be another. They may wish to conceal from the party in our country their advances towards peace with the government, because they are treating with the party upon the basis of hostility to the government. We know perfectly well that the party will consider as an abandonment of them any terms of peace between France and our government, and they fear that if their overtures to that effect should be known, their tendency would be to detach their devotees from their interest, and weaken the influence of their creatures.

That their object now seriously is negotiation, I can readily believe; for notwithstanding all their conquests within the last twelve months, their situation upon the whole is not so good, and their prospects are more threatening, than they were a year ago. A most formidable league is concerting against them, to the completion of which nothing is wanting but resolution at *Vienna*, for there, you may depend upon it, is the point where resolution is doubtful, and where a failure of it will give the fatal blow to the combination now attempting. Here take it for certain nothing will be done. Sieyès is coldly regarded, and generally disliked. But he is feared,

[1] Pichon gave Talleyrand's letter to Murray to be communicated only to the President. Even the French chargé at The Hague was ignorant of the negotiation. Murray suggested two reasons: 1, because Pichon spoke English, and 2, to save their pride if nothing came of it.

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and is neither gone nor likely to go. Peace and neutrality are the watchwords of the government, and are so conformable to the popular sentiments that they are the constant theme of flattery and adulation to the royal ears and eyes. As to forcing down a different system, it will not be attempted; and if it should, it would arm this country against the force, and of course connect it with *France*.[1]

. . . . . .

Yours &c.

TO GEORGE WASHINGTON

BERLIN, 29th October, 1798.

SIR:

I have the honor to inclose herewith a letter from a young gentleman who bears your name, and who flatters himself with being (though distantly) related to you.[2] He is by birth an Hollander, but of a family originally English, which went over from England and settled in the United Netherlands, sometime near the beginning of the present century.

At the commencement of the present war he served in the Dutch troops, and was for some months a prisoner in France; but at the period of the revolution which made his country an ally to France he resigned his commission, and is now desirous, if an opportunity of service should present itself in America, to go there. His superior officers, several of

[1] "Since my last I have your favor of the 18th inst. As to the renewal of 'ancient ties,' meaning thereby the old treaty of 1778, it is no longer in our own power. The great and important advantages of having her prizes admitted into our ports, and those of her enemies with their capturing vessels excluded, must be dissolved irrevocably, for we have stipulated you know not to grant these advantages by any future treaty, of which France had fair and ample warning. She chose, thus warned, to throw away the advantage, and must abide by the consequences." *To William Vans Murray*, October 27, 1798. Ms.

[2] James Washington. See *Writings of Washington* (Sparks), XI. 392, 393.

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whom are here, bear honorable testimony to his character and conduct. His rank was that of an ensign. He expects to spend the winter here in the further pursuit of military knowledge. From the favorable account I have had of him I have not hesitated to comply with his request in transmitting the inclosed letter, and in promising to deliver to him such answer as you may think proper to make to his application.

I am happy in having this opportunity to express my warm and cordial participation in the joy, which all true Americans have felt, upon finding again secured to our country the benefit of your important services, by your acceptance of the command of her armies. However much to be regretted is the occasion which has again summoned you from your beloved retirement, there is every reason to hope, that the spirit of firmness and dignity which your example has so powerfully contributed to inspire and maintain, will either obviate the necessity of another struggle for our independence, or once more carry us victoriously and gloriously through it.

I received in London the letter which you did me the honor to write me at Mount Vernon, on the 25th of June of the last year, and beg leave to offer you my grateful thanks for the favorable sentiments which you were pleased to express in it relative to myself, and my continuance in that line of public service to which I had the honor of being introduced by your choice, a circumstance which I shall always cherish as one of the most flattering and honorable events of my life.

Renewing the most ardent wishes for your health and happiness, I remain with perfect respect, Sir, your very humble and obedient servant.[1]

[1] "Your communications with P[ichon] have not been kept secret on *their* part, for the Spanish Minister here a few days since told me that France had been mak-

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

8 December, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The Mr. A[1] (son of Colonel H.), who so easily procured a passport for Paris, is probably one of those worthy characters who got himself naturalized as a Frenchman to privateer with a clear conscience upon Americans two or three years ago. Neither the treaty offensive and defensive nor the independence of St. Domingo would suit his politics, any more than those of his *uncle-father*. The treaty, I imagine, was concluded upon the English stock exchange. As to St. Domingo, Pitcairn writes me that an American captain from New York, 5th October, gives it as positive that its independence was declared; but Mr. King says nothing of it on the 27th ultimo. . . .

I am surprised that Eustace should attack Munroe, though he never appeared much to like him. E. has all the qualities you mention, together with the fluency and flash of a Frenchman. But he is so turbulent, so captious, and bombastic, he has such an instinct of perverseness, and withal so little moderation and prudence, that he cannot be a formidable though a very troublesome enemy. Monroe's greatest enemy is himself, and his own book. The most malignant foe

ing propositions to us in *Holland*. The truth is, they are now particularly anxious to have it believed that the differences with us will be settled. I too have witnessed the delight which the apparent change of *France's* conduct towards us has given to her enemies, have often been complimented as an *American*, that my country was the only one which had made her change her insolence to fawning. This credit, which we have so unequivocally acquired, I hope we shall retain." *To William Vans Murray*, November 3, 1798. Murray had written, October 26: "In truth all the world chuckles, believe me, at what they believe to be the humiliation of France respecting the United States."

[1] Samuel Andrews, son-in-law of Hichborn.

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could not pronounce so complete a sentence of damnation both upon his head and heart as that work. It is so unanswerably bad that you see even faction is ashamed of it. . . .

I am &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 140 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 24 December, 1798.

DEAR SIR:

I received a few days since your favor No. 10, dated 24 September. With my next I shall inclose copies of the answer from the Cabinet Ministry to my last note, concerning the renewal of the treaty with Prussia and of my reply, whereby you will perceive the present situation of that negotiation.

Some time since Mr. King wrote to me desiring me to procure 10,000 muskets of the manufacture of this country, if I could obtain permission from the government for their exportation. I accordingly applied immediately to Count Haugwitz to know whether such a permission could be obtained. After some time, which was necessary to consult the military department upon the subject, he gave me for answer:

That there is but one manufacture of small arms in this country, which supplies the muskets for the king's own troops, and that the number which the manufacture can annually produce is very limited. That within the last twelve months permission had been granted for the exportation of 30,000, the greatest part of which were alleged, and by his Majesty's government fully believed, to be for the United States. That owing to this large exportation, and to some recent alterations in the form of the muskets

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used by the king's troops, all the produce of the manufactory for a year to come, would be necessary for them, and that it was therefore impossible to grant the permission desired.

He added that the king very seriously regretted the circumstances which prevented a compliance with the request, which I might be assured nothing else could have done; as in any other case the king would not only have given the permission, but would have felt great pleasure in having an opportunity to give thereby a proof of his friendship for the United States, and his disposition to oblige them.

The arms which have been exported under the allegation of being for the United States, I have some reason to believe are really destined for Switzerland.

I inquired of the Swedish minister whether he knew anything of the history of the deduction from the duties upon goods imported into Sweden in American vessels, and mentioned the claim which Mr. Backman[1] had made for compensation on account of his having obtained it. He answered that he did not know the particular history of the affair, and did not wish to bar any claim to which that gentleman might think himself entitled; that the alteration was certainly considerably advantageous in favor of American vessels, but he did not imagine there could have been much pains or expense necessary to obtain it.

He asked me likewise whether the United States would be disposed *to purchase the Island of St. Bartholomew, which Sweden*[2] would be very glad to *sell to them*. I told him that it was contrary to the political system of the United States to wish for the possession *of colonies*, that I doubted very much whether they would *accept as a gift any island in the West*

[1] Elias Backman, United States consul at Gothenburg.

[2] In cipher. The island had been ceded by France to Sweden in 1784, and was restored to France in 1877.

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Indies. He said that perhaps it might be made of some use to the United States for other purposes *than as a colony*, and wished me to write you an account of the proposal. If it should meet with acceptance, he said, the arrangement might be comprehended in the treaty at its renewal, *and Sweden would ask no more for the island than what it had cost her to maintain it since it was ceded to her by France*. I have, therefore, to request of you a formal answer upon this matter, that I may communicate to the Swedish minister, though I have little doubt upon my mind what it will be. . . .

I have the honor, &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 141 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 31 December, 1798.

SIR:

I have now the honor to inclose copies of the answer of the Cabinet Ministry to my note of 29 October, concerning the renewal of the commercial treaty between the United States and Prussia, and of my reply, which I presented to Count Finckenstein on the 25th instant.[1] During the interval from the time when I received the answer, I had repeated conversations with Count Haugwitz upon the subject and the substance of my reply was founded upon the result of those conversations.

You will observe by these papers how tenaciously this government adheres to the principle of making neutral bottoms cover enemy's property in time of war, and to the very limited list of contraband contained in the treaty of 1766 between Russia and Great Britain. At the time when

[1] Both documents are printed in *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 260, 262.

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Frederick II acceded to the armed neutrality, having no commercial treaty with any of the then belligerent powers, he adopted this list as that which was most favorable to the neutral interests, and it has ever since been considered here as the criterion of contraband. After having given up in my last note the article of timber for shipbuilding, I should most probably have abandoned the other naval stores in the present had not your letters of 24 September expressed *so much indifference whether the treaty should be renewed at all, and I shall yet abandon them, if this government should persist in rejecting them.*[1]

Upon the other point, the stipulation proposed instead of the 12th article of the old treaty expressly holds out the question concerning neutral bottoms and goods as a contested point, and it is preceded by a labored argument to prove, that by the present laws of nations the principle of the old treaty is prescribed. But in conformity to your instructions, I did not think myself authorized even to admit by any implication, that the principle prescribed by the law of nations can be a subject of controversy, and hence in objecting to the words which present it as such as was necessary to answer the arguments in maintenance of the position.

I have in my reply offered two alternatives for avoiding in the new treaty any mention of the point, and if a positive inference could be drawn from what Count Haugwitz assured me was his opinion, I might conclude that one or the other of them will be accepted. I shall not be surprised, however, if the difficulty in this case should still recur, for I judge from what has hitherto passed, that they are apprehensive an alteration of the express agreement in the treaty of 1785 might be construed into an

[1] In cipher.

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abandonment of the principle, unless the substantial article should contain some expression which should evidently reserve it; and it is perfectly clear that they are extremely averse to abandon the principle. Their own convention with Great Britain in 1798 is, to be sure, an argument against them, so strong in itself that I have not thought it necessary to dwell much upon it, and therefore barely alluded to it in my second note. You will see how they explain it in the inclosed answer, and consider it as compatible with the system which, at other times, Prussia has maintained, and now again wishes to support.

In the discussion concerning the papers to be specified for the purpose of ascertaining the neutrality of merchant vessels and their cargoes in time of war, as I had not the benefit of your instructions, I was obliged to proceed upon such principles as occurred to my mind as best calculated to answer the object intended by these papers. The sea letter, the muster roll and the invoices, appeared indispensable in a treaty which does not adopt the principle of allowing the bottom to protect both persons and goods; but the other paper for which they so strenuously contend seemed to me unnecessary, as tending to prove nothing but what the sea letter alone suffices to show, and as binding the parties to certain forms of documents which their internal commercial regulations might require to be altered. In my last conversation with Count Haugwitz he concurred with me fully in the opinion, and I hope, therefore, that the additional paper will not be insisted upon. I have felt the more embarrassment upon this subject, because I have not with me the latest laws of the United States prescribing the papers with which vessels of the United States must be provided.

The case of the *Wilmington Packet*, upon which so many fruitless applications have been made to the government in

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Holland for indemnity, suggested to me the idea of allowing time after the breaking out of a war, for the neutral nation to furnish its vessels with the proper papers.

Since receiving your letter of 24 September I have felt much less anxious about the speedy conclusion of the treaty than I was before. In one of my last conversations with Count Haugwitz I told him that if the Prussian government had the smallest scruple or hesitation about the renewal of the treaty on account of the situation of our affairs with France, I know enough of the sentiments of my government to assure him, that they were by no means desirous that Prussia should take any step, at which she should feel the smallest reluctance; and that if she thought it most expedient, would postpone the conclusion of the treaty until a time which should be perfectly suitable to both parties. He said he was very glad I had given him an opportunity to assure me in the most positive and unequivocal manner, that the situation of our affairs with France had not entered into the consideration of his Majesty's government in regard to the renewal of the treaty, and that it certainly never would. That the friendly sentiments of the king towards the United States rested upon grounds, which could not be affected by the changes in the political views of other European powers, and that the transactions between the American and French governments were of a nature which could not induce any impartial and honest third party to favor the latter. He then expressed himself with great bitterness and severity concerning the conduct of the French government in general, and especially upon its present treatment of the King of Sardinia.

. . . . . .

I have the honor &c.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

9 February, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

Your No. 7, of 31st ultimo, was not only welcome as all your letters are, but had the additional merit of relieving me from the anxiety that I felt on account of your health. The same uncertainty with regard to the events in Italy yet continues here, as was the case with you when you wrote last. It proves, however, only an uncertainty upon *what day* the French took possession of Naples. I have for several weeks had no other uncertainty upon my mind in this case. Of the result of the war I can have no more doubt, than I should of a war between the hens and the hawks. I ought to ask your pardon for this perpetual repetition of the same idea, but the truth is that in contemplating the affairs of this continent I am always irresistibly brought to it, and every new occurrence serves only to confirm it. That the course of events will produce that state of anarchy which you describe, and all the countries of Europe be desolated by hordes of half insurgents, half robbers, appears highly probable. The general maxims which the experience of the last seven years have established as I think beyond a controversy are these. That there exists in France a power able and determined to overthrow all the governments in Europe, and the whole system, religious and political, which has for some centuries governed that quarter of the earth. But that this power is either not able or not desirous, perhaps, either to establish *any* political or religious system instead of that which it means to overturn. The principle of destruction is certain of its effect. But with regard to what will succeed it is not easy to foresee how long the anarchy which you anticipate, will prevail, or how soon it will subside into

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one or more military despotisms. These alternatives are both horrible in prospect, but I can see no other upon any rational calculation of probabilities.

If H[ichborn] and his friends really wrote home to recommend that you should be appointed to settle our affairs with France, it is a proof that they wish an arrangement to take place, of which however I still have my doubts. Their recommendation I am persuaded will not injure you there, as it does not in my mind, because my confidence in you is unbounded.[1]

As to H's having changed his opinion about the views of France since September, and his being very angry against his quondam friends, you know what all his *slang* is worth. Three years ago he cursed them with a mouth quite as foul as now. I had it from a person to whom he then uttered all that his power of language could express against them. He then went home, and soon after wrote a letter to Mr. King which I have seen, in which he said, that as the partisans of General Washington imputed to him all the prosperity our country enjoyed, it was but just to impute also to him all that we were suffering, and especially from the resentment of France.

The message of the Directory[2] upon privateering only proves that they wish to possess the power of settling everything of that nature in their own hands. Their reasoning upon the subject is very good, though founded upon principles which the short sighted self sufficiency of their political reformers exploded. The power which they solicit

[1] See *Murray to McHenry*, January 30, 1799, in Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry*, 373.

[2] Delivered January 13, recommending a revision of the prize laws, and a transfer of the power to decide prize questions in the last resort from the ordinary tribunals to the Directory.

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in its nature belongs to the executive department, like all other relations of a state with other states. So we have been taught by sound reason, by Locke, Montesquieu, and even Rousseau. But the wise men of French regeneration, and the sublime Constitution de l'an III [1795] have settled it otherwise. They, like the profound philosophers of the Mock Doctor, have changed the positions of the heart and liver, and placed on the right side what used to be on the left, and now the Directory come with a finger in the mouth to the councils and tell them they find it won't do, and hope they will put back things as they were before. However there is little reason to confide more in the equity of the Directory, than of this or that tribunal of commerce. Their object is manifestly not to do justice to neutrals, but to increase their own power, and their message on this occasion is like that in answer to the question of the councils concerning the rebellion in Belgium. Then they asked for money, now for power. The habit seems to grow upon them and succeeds so well, that it may be expected they will soon like prudent lawyers make it a rule never, never, to give an opinion without having first pocketed the fee.

Ever yours.

TO JOHN ADAMS

10 February, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I received a few days ago your letter of 16th October last, written from Quincy. With respect to the renewal of the treaties with Sweden and Prussia I have kept the Secretary of State regularly informed of my proceedings and the answers given by the respective courts, which, therefore, there is no occasion of repeating to you. I have likewise given him a general sketch of the occurrences of the moment in this quar-

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ter of the world. Since I wrote him last the most important event that has happened is the surrender of Ehrenbreitstein to the French on the 25th of last month. They have also made themselves masters of Naples, though as yet no official account has ascertained the day upon which they took possession of it. These events, together with their assumption of Piedmont, have been seen by the two great German powers, without inducing them to take any step for preventing the progress of the conquerors. There is every probability that neither of them will engage in the war until directly attacked. This court has been indeed alarmed, more perhaps at the quietness which Austria has preserved, than at the successive crumbling of the ruins of Italy. For a moment it appeared probable that Prussia would engage in new hostilities, but that moment is past, and now there is little doubt but the system of standing merely upon the defensive will continue to prevail. Mr. Thomas Grenville, an elder brother of the English Secretary of State, has been appointed upon a special mission to this court and that of Vienna.[1] He has been expected here these two months, but has been prevented from reaching the continent by the severity of the season which has been unusually great.[2] The object of his mission is reported to be to effect a concert between Austria and Prussia in some system to withstand the encroaching power of France. Britain is indefatigable in the pursuit of this object, in which it appears impossible that she should succeed. At present a degree of distrust more than common exists between the two rivals, and England is far from being upon terms of harmony with Austria. The cabinet of Vienna is making continual protestations to those of London and St. Petersburg, that it is determined upon a renewal of the

[1] *Historical Mss. Com.*, Fortescue Mss., IV, V.

[2] "Was introduced to Mr. Grenville." Ms. *Diary*, February 23, 1799.

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war, and notwithstanding all the appearances to the contrary they believe these professions. That the war will sooner or later commence is beyond doubt, but I am persuaded it will be only when France had determined upon it. The Directory will keep the election of peace or war constantly in their own hands, and at the very moment when they find themselves ready will strike. This state of suspense itself is, for the remaining monarchies of this continent, of the same benefit as medicines which postpone the issue of an incurable disease, for it is extremely probable that not one of them will survive another war against them waged by France.

The Directory continue, however, their professions of a disposition for reconciliation with the United States. And they have lately sent to the Council of Five Hundred a message upon the subject of sea prizes, which has every semblance of a determination to discourage privateering, especially against the trade of neutral powers. But its real object is to obtain a discretionary power, by virtue of which they might make and alter their maritime regulations at their pleasure. They ask of the councils to decree that all prize causes shall finally be settled "*administrativement*"; that is they require not merely an united executive and legislative, but something more comprehensive still, an arbitrary power. Their argument is more ingenious than ingenuous. They say "your laws concerning prizes are bad. Therefore you must change them, that is you must give us the power of dispensation from them." Whether the Council will notice that in this case the explanation is in direct opposition to the thing explained, and that under the pretence of asking an alteration in the laws the Directory ask for a power above the laws, is yet to be seen. But to every eye it must be plain, that they are less concerned for a reformation of the

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laws, than for an addition to their own powers. It is however evident from the facts alleged in this document that the system which they have hitherto pursued has been as pernicious, as it has been disagreeable to France. They tell us the fate of all privateers fitted out is to fall sooner or later into the hands of the English; that there is not a single merchant vessel under French colors sailing upon the ocean; that by privateering alone they have within the last three years lost a balance of twenty thousand sailors, captured by the enemy, and that under their present marine laws neutral vessels laden for the account of the French government have been taken by French cruisers, and condemned by French courts of admiralty. This circumstance serves to characterize in a perfect manner the wisdom and justice of their regulations. Probably if the Directory could settle all such cases *administrativement*, they would find a remedy for this special case. But if the loss should fall upon a neutral merchant or government instead of themselves, there is no reason to suppose they would be so equitable.

I showed to the Baron de Thulemeyer the passage in your letter concerning him, with which he was very much delighted, and requested me to express his gratitude for your kind remembrance. As to your political question he did not venture to answer it, but considered it as answering itself, and only said you were perfectly right. In truth upon this subject, not only his individual sentiments but those which prevail in this cabinet, are accurate. They see the mischief plainly enough, and only lament their insufficiency to find remedy. The Prussian monarchy itself has contributed its share in the sacrifice which gives the Rhine to France as a boundary. It has given its limb for a few more years of lingering life, and while it trembles for its existence, it has scarce leisure to regret the loss which it cannot repair.

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I inclose herewith a letter for you which I lately received from Baron de Blumenstein, at Breslau, a captain in the Prussian service, and a lover of chemical studies it seems. I have no personal acquaintance with him or further knowledge of him than what he gives of himself in his letter, and in one to me inclosing it and requesting me to forward it together with the memoir to you. Though I have not much confidence in the success of the remedy which he proposes for the prevention or extirpation of the yellow fever, I consider it as proceeding from a most laudable intention, and have thanked him in answer to his letter for the interest which he takes in the welfare of my country, as well as expressed my esteem for his ardor in the cause of humanity.

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

23 February, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I did not write you by the last post presuming that the same floods which deprived me of the pleasure of receiving your letters would in like manner arrest the passage of mine. Since then I have received at once your Nos. 8, 9 and encore 9, and later yet 10, to which I can now reply only in a few words, being at length very much busied upon a project for a treaty just sent me. You will perhaps inquire what I have been doing these fifteen months, that it is now but come to this, and I scarcely know how to answer the question. Very little, if any, of the delay has been owing to me.[1] I will tell you more of it when the business is concluded, or before. In the meantime this information is only for yourself.

[1] "March 1, 1799. Making out the last fair copy of my note to the Cabinet Ministry. I have uniformly made it a rule thus to write them off three times before presenting them." Ms. *Diary*.

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I could give you several reasons why H[ichborn] is an irrecoverable man, though I have no doubt of his endeavoring to convince you that he has altered his opinions. You are right as to the sources of his party spirit. They are all personal. But his pretexts and his associates hold him by too many ties for him to break loose from them, if he were even so disposed; his mode of conversation with you is not new, it is habitual to him. He was always in his talk *grey*, and in his actions *black*.

. . . . . .

P.S. 26th February. I was too late for the last post before I could finish the within. Since then the Batavian mails fail again, and I have nothing further from you. I am still occupied as on Saturday. I hear from Hamburg that H[ichborn] was *ordered* out of France for making free with his tongue. This may possibly have touched his pride so much as to make him seem more ready from conversation. But I hold him, as I said within, for an irrecoverable man. Yours.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

2 March, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I received two days ago your No. 11 of 18th ultimo. I have lately been very negligent about reading the French papers. For, as where I am situated, I can gather nothing from them worth writing home, I have no incentive to peruse them adequate to compensate the ineffable disgust of wading through such heaps of bombast and falsehood, as fills them all. I have, therefore, not seen the piece in the *Publiciste* of which you speak, relative to the speech.[1]

[1] Of President Adams to Congress. The article attributed its moderation to the influence of the opposition. Jefferson thought it "so like himself in point of moderation," and attributed it to "military conclave, and particularly Hamilton."

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But of this I am very sure that from France or French adherents no credit will ever be allowed for moderation, or anything else on the part of the President. And in the present instance I suppose there is some foundation for the opinion that the influence of the opposition is discernible in the temper of the speech. You told H[ichborn] it was not up to your mark, and most assuredly it was not up to mine. It is in the nature of our government to be too much shackled by an opposition too strong to be slighted. The moderation was necessary, and so much the worse for our country that it was. We get used, however, to everything. There has been so much noise and so much heat expended by our opposition upon measures, which have been carried through with success in spite of it, that it must become less important upon every new cry that it raises. Hard struggling we shall always have to effect any good, but the continued habit of labor accommodates in time the disposition.

. . . . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

5 March, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I should envy you much more the advantage of seeing and conversing so frequently with our countrymen, if I could think more charitably of those who favor us with their visits. But they are almost without exception men whom, cold and phlegmatic as I am, I could not see without feeling the blood of indignation boil within me. Of H[ichborn] you have at length a good riddance. As to your *cousin* Vans,[1] I shall say little. He told you a good story, which

[1] Described as of Salem. William Vans, Junior, was a signer of the address made to Monroe on his recall.

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seems to be a faculty belonging to the family. I wish he had some other qualities yet more valuable, which as belonging to the family he ought certainly by the same rule to possess. One of them is candor. At this day an American is, I think, ill justified in having owned a French privateer, by alleging that he had been robbed by the English, or that he did not rob his countrymen. For nine times in ten what they call English robbery, was the fair capture and condemnation of property justly liable to confiscation by the universal laws of nations. And the owner of a privateer cannot prescribe to his captain whom he shall plunder, and whom spare. The captain must obey the instructions of the government under whose authority he cruises. Mr. V's apologies therefore seem to me poor palliatives. I am glad I am not his judge. For as he bears a name and some blood in common with you, I should be fearful of suffering myself to be swayed in my decision by the respect of persons.

Young H[igginson] the son of an excellent father, has been himself according to all accounts as bad as possible. Has not only renounced his country, but openly and without hesitation declared himself its enemy in word and deed. No wonder that he found the climate of Boston too warm. All his relations are among the most decisive friends of the government among us, and if I mistake not the late Senator, Mr. Cabot, is his uncle. He himself has always borne the character of an eccentric and very wild young man, with extremely violent passions. He married a French woman about [ ] years ago, but I know not what he has done with her.[1]

. . . . . .

[1] John Higginson, son of Stephen Higginson, married, in 1796 or 1797, Josephine, daughter of Etienne-François, Comte de la Porte. George Cabot married Elizabeth Higginson, a sister of Stephen. See Higginson, *Descendants of the Rev. Francis Higginson*, 24.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

26 March, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your No. 18 of the 19th instant. I am glad you have seen La F[ayette], and not surprised that you found him full of the same fanaticism from which he has already suffered so much, a great part of which, however, with him is what it always was, ungovernable ambition in disguise. He is willing to look upon himself as a martyr of liberty, because five years of imprisonment lose almost all their credit and reputation, when they are considered as having been the result of folly or wickedness. There is therefore more address and subtlety in his enthusiasm, than you think. His character, at least as far as judgment combined with honesty is concerned, has long since been irretrievable with thinking men. By recanting he would gain nothing in their opinion, and he would lose most of his personal partisans. I believe he thinks his intentions as good as you allow them to be, but he is a man extremely apt to mistake the operations of his heart as well as those of his head. You will very probably discover before he quits your neighborhood, that he deals largely in a sort of minute intrigue not calculated to inspire confidence. If he goes to America, his project will probably be to keep well with all parties there, and of course avoid as much as possible every thing obnoxious to any. As to his being sounded about undertaking business for the Directory there, I suspect that however it has been represented to you, in real truth the sounding has been on the other side, by him or his friends. I have seen heretofore somewhat of the tactics peculiar to his sect, and can trace the same *manner* in Barlow and Fen-

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wick's applications which you lately mentioned, and sundry other recent appearances.[1]

I have some American papers to late in January. Your friend Logan is chosen a member of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives, and W. Blount member and speaker of the State Senate in Tennessee. I would send you Marshall's published declaration against the Alien and Sedition Laws, but you will doubtless have it before this reaches you.[2] I suppose this is the way of putting the foot into the stirrup of opposition, and if he goes to Congress we shall soon find him full mounted galloping with the best of them.

. . . . . .

[1] "*Entre nous* he was written to to *be sounded* by Dupont de N[emours], recommending him to go to U. S., and incline us to terms. He answered that as an honest man and real friend of the U. S. he could do nothing if there, because he saw no solid ground for the fulfilment of any promises they might make to U. S. I had abundance of talk with him on this point, stating the odium which would be brought on him if he interfered. I stated various things to disincline him from going to U. S., but he is fixed; he will go in June. I then told him of the arts that would be used to entangle him against Government, by a set of men who had not been his friends when he was seized, but who considered him as having deserted the cause of Republicanism, etc., etc. He loves General Washington, and Hamilton, and my friend McHenry." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, The Hague, March 19, 1799. Ms. For some warnings against the possible mission of Lafayette, written by George Cabot, see *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, III. 38*n*.

[2] "I am ready to join you as well as Ames in reprobating the publication of Marshall's sentiments on the Sedition and Alien Acts, but I still *adhere* to my first opinion that Marshall ought not to be attacked in the newspapers, nor too severely condemned anywhere, because Marshall has not yet learned his whole lesson, but has a mind and disposition which can hardly fail to make him presently an accomplished political scholar and a very useful man. Some allowance too should be made for the influence of the atmosphere of Virginia, which doubtless makes every one who breathes it visionary and, upon the subject of free government, incredibly credulous; but it is certain that Marshall at Philadelphia would become a most powerful auxiliary to the cause of order and good government, and *therefore* we ought not to diminish his fame, which would ultimately be a loss to ourselves." *Cabot to Rufus King*, April 26, 1799. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, III. 9.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

30 March, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

You were right respecting the nature of Taylor's[1] motion in the Virginia House of Delegates and their consequent resolutions, which with those of Kentucky have not met with success in any of the other states.[2] They are certainly meant as the tocsin of insurrection. The same Virginia legislature have since passed other resolves, intimating an intention to arm their militia against the general government, and I understand from Mr. K[ing], in London, that the expectations in the United States are that an armed opposition from the disaffected quarters will take place. Mr. K[ing] himself does not think Virginia will attempt it for the present, but appears persuaded that an appeal to arms will before long be made. I am not altogether of this opinion; riots on the part of the malcontents and forbearance on that of the government there may and very probably will be. But things appear to me very far from being ripe for the serious struggle which must, indeed, some day happen between the Ancient Dominion and the Union. The very threat of recurring to arms argues a timidity that would fain intimidate, rather than a serious danger to carry the menace into execution. Desperate men indeed sometimes fly to violent measures, impelled by passion rather than policy, and Logan's mission, together with those threats of Virginia, are strong symptoms of desperation in the party. They are the first samples of formal tampering with a foreign power and of defiance to civil war. Both the examples once made will be the more readily renewed. Both are in direct

[1] John Taylor of Caroline.

[2] See *Writings of Jefferson* (Ford), VII. 289.

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opposition to the fundamental principles of our Constitution, and lead directly to that state in which laws are silent, a state for which as for death, however we may dread it, we ought at that time to be constantly prepared.

I sent you two or three posts ago a choice morsel in the letter from Citizen Barlow.[1] I now send you L[ogan]'s account of his tour to Paris,[2] in which there are doubtless numerous mistakes in point of fact, among which I rather wish than believe the assertion, that La F[ayette] procured him the means of proceeding from Hamburg to Paris, to be one. I am now more confirmed in the suspicion concerning La F[ayette], which I intimated to you in my last, than I was when I wrote you. He himself, my dear sir, or his friends for him, are the soliciting and intriguing persons to get the means of interfering in those affairs, and what with his double allegiance, his rights-of-man fanaticism, and his loose political morality, I expect he will give us no small trouble, though I do not apprehend from him much eventual injury. Your concern lest he should, if he went to the Hague, be arrested was perhaps unnecessary; nor should I give much credit either to his own discourse, nor to that of his pretended enemies at the Hague on this subject.[3] I *could* tell

[1] Barlow's letter to his brother-in-law, Abraham Baldwin, member of Congress from Georgia. It was dated March 1, 1798. See *Writings of John Adams*, VIII. 625.

[2] "Address to the Citizens of the United States," January 12, 1799.

[3] "I have had a hint that Lafayette had a sort of permission to go to Holland, and can scarcely think he would venture there without it. I have no doubt but his attachment to America is sincere, but he would feel it as bitter an exile to go and live there as he thought that of Ploen. I think exactly as you do of him. Since his liberation, his conduct, as far as I know it, has all proved his hankering for the leeks and onions. He has licked the hand raised to shed his blood too much to be of a truly spirited breed. He has not quite descended to the level of Kosciuszko, but neither does he prove himself much above it." *To William Vans Murray*, March 9, 1799. Ms.

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you an anecdote nearly sixteen years old and of course anterior to the French revolution, from which I gathered the propriety of suspending my absolute confidence in the tenor of his assertions relating to his own conduct or opinions in public affairs.

. . . . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

2 April, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

And I too felt no small satisfaction to find that Joel Barlow had unfolded himself so fully. One of the Jacobin English reviewers compares Tom Paine to Luther, and if there be any resemblance between them, Joel must be Tom's Melancthon. Joel has nothing of his own, he takes his whole political creed from Tom, but having had a learned education and being a man of rhymes, he has sometimes given a grace of expression to Tom's specious doctrines, with which he was not able to clothe them himself. I remember the time when Joel most humbly supplicated the permission of his Most Christian Majesty Louis 16, King of France and Navarre, to dedicate to him the *Vision of Columbus*. His Majesty not only accepted the dedication, but paid very bounteously for it by subscribing for fifty or one hundred copies of the book.[1] The dedication and the poem itself abundantly show Joel's manner of thinking with regard to kings at the zenith of their power. But Joel has no abstract attachment to monarchy. With him the true Amphitryon is the man that gives the dinner. His maxim is that of Falstaff, "He that rewards me, Heaven

[1] The king subscribed for twenty-five copies, Washington for twenty, and Lafayette for ten. In 1807 the work was reprinted as *The Columbiad*, and was dedicated to Robert Fulton, at whose expense it was issued.

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reward him"; and he can accommodate himself to become the parasite of a Director, as readily as he was that of a Bourbon in his glory. I have heard from pretty good authority that Joel is a man of weak nerves too, and that during the reign of Robespierre especially he had a most trembling horror of the Guillotine. From the tone of his letter one would imagine he thought all his former countrymen as tremulous as himself, as all his arguments are appeals to cowardice. Analyze the whole letter and you will find it one prescription, "Cringe to these rascals, because they are strong," a system which, however conformable to Joel's temper, principles and practice, most fortunately our countrymen did not think proper to pursue.

Strong they are, it is true too, and they find but too many Joel Barlows in Europe ready to sacrifice honor and safety to the fear of offending them. But this weakness has saved not one of their enemies; they devour the submissive with as little compunction as the proud. The turn of Austria is now come, and I wish I could hope like you that either the Archduke or the Russians will save her. But you need not fear that Prussia will join with France. She will remain neutral. Count Haugwitz has not retired from office, nor is there any present prospect of such an event.

We are told that Sieyès will probably be chosen to fill the vacancy in the Directory, and that Talleyrand will come here in his stead. S[ieyès] is an indifferent negotiator, wherever he cannot dictate all the conditions. His manners and temper are extremely repulsive, and excepting the attention that fear has extorted towards him here, he has been treated with universal neglect. Caillard was treated with as universal respect. Talleyrand if he comes will be a much more dangerous man than Sieyès.

. . . . . .

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

9 April, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

You have before this the Secretary of State's report upon Mr. Gerry's Nantasket road communication, and have been doubtless much pleased with it.[1] I should have liked it better had some of the expressions been moderated, and some extrinsic observations omitted. He has indeed demonstrated the baseness and futility of those measures, which the Directory adopted with so much ostentation as proofs of their conciliatory disposition, and as Gerry in his last report showed himself the dupe of their flimsy professions, and had made himself the instrument of duping others, it was necessary to expose to our countrymen how false and hollow were all these pretences to kindness upon which so much stress was laid.

The late decree about the *rôle d'équipage* is a chip of the same block.[2] But among the ingenious devices of imposture, the springs to catch wood-cocks which have been laid with so little art of concealment, that of introducing the American flag again in their feast of the sovereign People is not the least amusing. It made me laugh heartily. But I should not be surprised if this profound expedient should have been contrived by such sagacious peacemakers as Skipwith and Joel Barlow, or Codman,[3] whose nerves will be put once more to the test by Mr. Pickering's report. I believe it will verily make Joel's hair stand on end to see, notwithstanding

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 229.

[2] The Directory issued a decree March 2, 1797, requiring a crew list (*rôle d'équipage*). Its bearing is explained in Moore, *Digest of International Law*, V. 559. A decree of March 18, 1799, did not relieve the burden of complaint. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 594.

[3] Richard Codman.

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all his cautions, how cavalierly and with what desperate plunges of madness the Secretary yet handles his sharking friends, Barras, and Merlin, and Talleyrand, and the whole pandemonium of pigmies.

I have likewise, in a paper of 5 February, an excellent address from the minority in the Virginia House of Delegates to the people of the State,[1] upon the resolutions of the majority against the Alien and Sedition Laws. A sober, temperate and unanswerable argument, signed by fifty-eight members, which proves that good sense and honesty have not wholly abandoned the Ancient Dominion, however they may be out of favor.

I hear that both Skipwith and Bourne believe and say that the late decree is meant to exempt ourselves altogether from the claim of a *rôle d'équipage*. That Skipwith should say so is easy to conceive; but that Bourne should believe it, surprises me. He saw through the Tartuffe *arrêté* of last summer. The present one is of the very same description. "They did not mean to rob the Americans more than all other neutral nations by the *arrêté* of 12 Ventôse." My correspondent at Paris, who is full sanguine enough, says that it goes but a very little way to settle the great point in dispute, but will prevent condemnations upon absurd misconstructions of the Treaty of 1778. I think with you, however, that the spirit of privateering is evidently upon the decline at Paris, and the policy of keeping us at bay, while they have Austria and Russia upon their hands, is not difficult to trace.

. . . . . .

Ever yours &c.

[1] Prepared by John Marshall.

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TO JOHN MURRAY FORBES

BERLIN, 10 April, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I received a few days ago your favor of 22nd ultimo from Paris, and am much obliged to you for the information contained in it, and the late *arrêté* of the French Directory explaining an article of a former *arrêté*. It gives me great pleasure that any disposition towards a better system of policy relative to the United States should manifest itself in France. At the same time it would be more satisfactory, and tend to inspire a greater sincerity in the alleged conciliatory disposition, if measures so very insignificant in themselves were not held forth as the substantial proofs of an essential change of conduct. This *arrêté* in its purport is nothing. It pretends to guard against a construction which common sense and common honesty never could have made without it. Yet, as you observe, such constructions had been made, and as it will make a favorable change in the administration of the law, though none in the law itself, I am willing to allow it whatever credit it deserves. The English gentleman of the road not unfrequently after taking a purse of guineas returns to the traveller a shilling or a half crown, to enable him to pay the turnpike.

I have seen the message of 22 Nivôse [January 12] on the legislation of maritime prizes which you mention, and remarked a want of coincidence between the argument and the inference which it contains. The argument complains of bad laws. The inference is merely a request of power. The argument says, "your laws are unjust and impolitic." The inference does not say, "therefore repeal those laws," but "therefore give us the power to inforce them or dispense from them as we may think proper." Here is proof enough

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that the Directory wish to have their powers enlarged, but how much they felt concerned to have justice done to the neutrals outraged and ruined by the opposition of those laws, may be seen by their eulogium in this very message upon their own *arrêté*, directing their cruisers and tribunals to treat neutrals as the English treated them. This *arrêté* the message says was followed by very happy effects. That is, every cruiser under French colors at sea, and every privateering tribunal on shore, had only to assume as a datum any given rule that imagination could form or wickedness contrive, allege that the English condemned neutral vessels by such a rule, and then take, condemn and pocket all the neutral property that came within their reach. The same message says that one of the happy effects above mentioned was that the English *ceased* to capture indiscriminately all neutral vessels bound to French ports, thus asserting that the English had before that time made such indiscriminate captures. Now I know as well as the writer of the message that this assertion is utterly and unequivocally false, and what encouragement have all the commercial tribunals to assume as the rules of the English Admiralty any pretext whatever for condemnation, when they have the example of the Directory itself for the allegation of a barefaced untruth for the same purpose?

You will perceive that I am far from feeling much confidence in the probability of a reconciliation between the United States and France, such as may give occasion to an appointment like that which you have in contemplation. I believe that such very partial and trifling improvements in policy as the late *arrêté*, so ostentatiously displayed like similar measures taken last summer, will have a tendency rather to widen than to close the breach, by confirming the opinion that such demonstrations are insincere and hypo-

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critical; and as to the mission of Bournonville, or young Dupont, or any other person from the Directory, I might trust more in it, if I had not heard so much last autumn of great offers sent out by Mr. Gerry, and Dr. Logan, and Mr. Woodward,[1] and I know not whom, all which in the result have proved to signify nothing.

. . . . . .

Believe me &c.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 145 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 14 April, 1799.

SIR:

Since my last I have received a triplicate of your favor N. 12, dated December, with a quadruplicate of N. 11, the Journal of the House of Representatives, containing the President's speech at the opening of the session, and the

[1] *Works of John Adams*, VIII. 615. "One pamphlet has lately been circulated with an avidity proportioned to the unusual exertions made for its suppression. It is an answer by your acquaintance Carnot, to the report of Bailleul upon the Revolution of 18 Fructidor. Carnot means it no doubt as a vindication of himself, but it contains numerous anecdotes and characters of his quondam colleagues in the Directory, which they may well endeavor by all means in their power to smother. This pamphlet has been published in English as well as French, and will certainly be known in America before this letter can reach you. A single passage in it deserves particular attention from Americans. He says that those who negotiated the treaty of peace with Spain were fools or traitors for not obtaining by it the cession of Louisiana, which would have been perfectly easy, and that afterwards he proposed in the Directory to give the possessions of the Duke of Modena to the Duke of Parma upon condition that Spain should cede the same province of Louisiana, which then, instead of languishing under a kingly government, would have been republicanized, and become the means of procuring to France a vast influence over the United States of America." *To Thomas Boylston Adams*, April 17, 1799. Ms.

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answer of the House, and a copy of the message of 21 January, with your report on the transactions relating to the United States and France. When the President's speech was published in France the newspapers under the eye of the Directory observed, that it discovered more moderation than preceding speeches, and imputed this to the fear of the French party in the United States, which, it was added, gained strength from day to day. At the same time the idea was assiduously spread abroad, that all the differences between the two countries were upon the point of an amicable settlement, and a perfect good understanding between them about to be restored.

The Directory pursuing still the same system of policy which induced them last summer to pass an *arrêté* concerning their cruisers in the West Indies, and the futility of which is so fully exposed in your report, have very recently passed another, explanatory of the 4th article in that of 12 Ventôse; by this they declare that they never intended to subject American vessels to any other exhibition of papers than are required of all other neutrals. In substance this declaration signifies nothing, for the article explained could not with common sense be construed to require more of Americans, than other neutrals were bound to by the ordinances of 1744 and 1778. But under a different construction it is said to have been often made, what it was probably meant to be, a pretext for condemnation; and a friend writes me from Paris that the explanation will doubtless contribute to the acquittal of many American vessels, which would without it be condemned by the commercial tribunals.

This is not the first measure since the beginning of the year, which has been held forth as a proof of the regard which the Directory entertain for the rights of neutral navigation. Nearly three months ago they sent a message to

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the councils upon the subject of the laws relating to prizes. The purport of this message was to show that the laws were altogether unjust, and it terminated with a request, not that the councils should repeal them, but that they should formally give an unlimited dispensing power to the Directory. You have proved that they did actually exercise this power to a certain degree, though without any authority from the legislature. Perhaps they thought further dispensations expedient, which might draw their power of dispensing into question, and therefore they asked for a decree, that all prize causes should be decided *administrativement*.

But this same message says that the *arrêté* of the Directory, ordering their cruisers and tribunals to treat neutrals as the English treated them, was attended with happy effects, particularly, that in consequence of it, the English *ceased* to capture indiscriminately all neutral vessels bound to French ports, and it cautiously avoids mentioning the law of 18 January, 1798, though it complains bitterly of the dereliction of the French ports by all neutral vessels. Some time after this message the Council of Elders passed a resolution to repeal the law of 18 January, but when the subject came before the 500, one of the members, Boulay-Paty,[1] from Nantes, who has long been a great patron of the privateers, moved and obtained that a message should be sent to the Directory to inquire what the operation of this law had been. The answer of the Directory has not yet appeared, but the address of the privateersman member to prevent the repeal of the law is easy to perceive. He knew that the Directory either did not wish it repealed, or if they did, that they would be ashamed to confess the pernicious operation of it, because they themselves had loudly and ostentatiously called for it scarce a single year before. By calling for their

[1] Pierre Sébastien Boulay-Paty (1763–1830).

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report, therefore, upon the effects of the law, he knew that a pretext for leaving it in force would be given.[1]

It is apparent, however, that the privateering party loses ground in France, and I am told that after the present elections it will yet be weaker, as the want of some commerce is sensibly felt throughout the country, and it is equally known that nothing can procure it until some check is given to the privateers. The want of seamen for the service of the nation is another urgent motive with the Directory, and they have lately forbidden the departure of any further privateers after the 4th of this month. . . .

TO RUFUS KING

BERLIN, 15th April, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I have now to thank you for your favor of 26 and 29 ultimo and 2 instant, which I received last evening as well as those of 12 and 22 ultimo, which reached me a few days ago, together with the packet from Philadelphia sent with the letter of the 12th of March.

I am much obliged to you for the information contained in all these letters, and yet much more for the confidence with which you express your sentiments respecting the nomination of a new commission to treat with France. I sincerely and deeply regret with you that any measure of the President upon that subject should tend either to damp the ardor of our military preparations, or to increase the divisions of the public opinion. The nomination I understood by an account in the English papers was rejected by the Senate, I presume upon the same ground as rendered the

[1] See *Rufus King to the Secretary of State*, January 14, 1799, in *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, II. 509.

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measure objectionable to you. This negative will, I hope, counteract any check the step may have given to the zeal of preparation, and I would fain hope also, that between this time and the next meeting of the Senate, circumstances will occur to prove that a further attempt to obtain an arrangement of our differences with France may be made with at least such reasonable hopes of success as justify the measure.

There are, I confess, numerous circumstances which appear to me as indications that the French policy with regard to neutral navigation in general, and to the United States in particular, has undergone an essential change. I know that the assurances given by Talleyrand that any minister who should be sent would be properly received, were as strong and unlimited as we could wish, and when coupled with the anxious solicitude that he manifested for the renewal of negotiation, they appeared to me a foundation sufficient to authorize one effort more on our part to restore peace. I did hope that some further preliminary discussions would take place, to precede a formal nomination of a new mission to France; yet by the limited powers of our executive I doubt whether such an informal negotiation could be carried on, or whether there was any other alternative than appointing a formal commission, or doing nothing.

The assurances were given I think in October, and since then the message of the Directory upon the subject of maritime legislation, the repeal of the law of 18 January, 1798, by the Council of Ancients (though not sanctioned by the 500), the *arrêté* explaining the former one concerning the requisite of a *rôle d'équipage*, the recall of the privateers in the European seas, and the decisions in the French admiralty courts, which have recently acquitted several valuable American vessels, and have admitted common shipping papers to answer for a *rôle d'équipage*, all these things have

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concurred to convince me, that a new negotiation for an arrangement would be expedient, and would have at this time prospects of success much more favorable than have offered at any previous period.

My great reliance upon a negotiation at this time would be, that in the present situation of affairs a restoration of peace and friendly intercourse with the United States is beyond all doubt the clear and unequivocal interest, not only of France but of the Directory itself, and all the measures which I have just mentioned as evidences that they themselves feel it. This interest will of itself soon compel a repeal of the laws which constitute the great bars to a reconciliation with us, so far as respects the future. I believe they would be heartily glad to have the pretext of giving up these laws by a negotiation, I think our government might derive great benefit by taking advantage of this critical moment. I am likewise of opinion that the negotiation would be more advantageously for us carried on in Europe than at Philadelphia, and if scruples of pride dissuade the Directory from sending a minister to America, we may let them indulge those scruples without urging them much to send us a man, who would intrigue with individuals, and manœuvre with parties, so as to embarrass again the course of the government.

From this view of things you will perceive that I consider the appointment of the new commission as an useful measure, and that I regret the negative put on it by the Senate. If, however, the judgment I have formed be just, I hope that no material inconvenience will happen from the delay until the nomination can be renewed, or some other measure to the same effect adopted. The capture of the frigate in the West Indies will not I presume make any essential alteration in the prospect. I hope, on the contrary, that it

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will tend to complete the conviction of the Directory that our spirit of resistance is serious, though we are still disposed to peace.

Their dispositions, which I suppose to have the same tendency, will doubtless depend much upon the fate of the war now renewed with so much bitterness. . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

16th April, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I have nothing from you by the last post, but since Saturday I hear by letters from Mr. K[ing] and English newspapers two pieces of news of no small importance, as they relate to the state of affairs between United States and France, and one of them especially concerning you.

On the 18th of February the President nominated you Minister Plenipotentiary to France.[1] The Senate appointed a committee of five to confer with him on the subject.[2] On the 26th he sent a new message nominating in addition Mr. Ellsworth and P. Henry with you, to constitute a commission to treat with France. This nomination was rejected by the Senate. The motive of this negative must

[1] *American State Papers*, Foreign Relations, II. 239.

[2] "The nomination to negotiate with the French Government was exceedingly regretted by every friend to the President and to the United States. I do not know an exception. A committee of the Senate (Sedgwick, Stockton, Read, Bingham and Ross) were prepared to report against the nomination of Mr. Murray on the morning of the 25th ulto., when the President sent in his second message, putting the negotiation in commission, and postponing its commencement until the receipt of the assurances required by his message of the 21st of June last. This palliated the evil in the only possible way in which it could be lessened. This latter nomination was readily approved." *Pickering to Rufus King*, March 6, 1799. Ms. See *Writings of John Adams*, VIII. 625; Gibbs, *Administrations of Washington and Adams*, II. 203.

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have been, that the Senate did not give sufficient credit to the assurances of Talleyrand, and did not believe the Directory sincerely desirous for a reconciliation with United States.

You will not impute it solely or even principally to my friendship for you, that I deeply regret the proceeding of the Senate in this case. Independent of that, and even of the mortification to find the Senate in opposition with the President, I am fully convinced that such a commission was expedient, and might at this time succeed in making such an arrangement with France, as would at least secure to us peace and safety for the future. I believe the present moment so favorable for negotiation, that I fear *some* of its advantages must be lost by delay.

If however the Directory seriously mean any compromise with us, they will perceive by this nomination, how strong the same intention is on our part, and by the non-concurrence of the Senate they will see that they must give further proofs of their sincerity before we can advance again to meet them. The means of negotiation are fully put into their power, and upon them alone depends their improvement.

The other news is the capture of the French frigate *l'Insurgente* of 44, by the American frigate *Constellation* of 36, after an action in which the French had 75 killed and wounded, and the American 2 killed and 1 wounded.

It is not difficult to see what the state of the public mind in our country must be, when even a nomination by the President of commissioners to negotiate with France is non-concurred by the Senate. They may judge how the French party as they pretended is *gaining ground.*

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

27 April, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

Since the information from America respecting the new commission to treat with France, a certain curiosity to know how the measure would be taken and represented at Paris has renewed my acquaintance with the newspapers of that city, which I had for some time abandoned. I had noticed the manner in which the *Publiciste* announced the new mission, and that in which the *Moniteur* speaks of it is alike deserving of attention. It begins by observing that *at length* the American government has *returned* to the policy dictated by its own interests and by *those of France*, and in spite of the intrigues and machinations of the English, appointed, etc. — which leaves no doubt but that the differences between the two Republics will be immediately settled to mutual satisfaction.

At the same time the English newspapers impute the appointment of the commission to the *increasing* influence of the French party. Thus it is, my dear sir, these two mortal antagonists to each other are perfectly agreed in one point, that is, that we are of course parcelled out entirely between them; that we are all English tools or French tools, and that every measure of our government must be instigated by one or the other of these parties. . . .

I must hope that P. Henry will not be the G[erry] of the new commission, though it is very evidently intended to make him so. I hardly think it will be attempted upon you, and I have an equal confidence in the Chief Justice.

. . . . . .

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

4 May, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I believe with you, that the great obstacle to an arrangement with France will be the subject of indemnity for her immense depredations upon our property. What the ideas and expectations of our government upon it will be I cannot anticipate. The instructions to the former commissioners expressly forbad their consent to any settlement, by which the government should charge itself with the payment. This would, however, be necessary, if the indemnity should be by a free and exclusive trade to the West Indies. Such a trade besides would be extremely precarious in the present state of the world. St. Domingo, if not yet formally asserting independence, shows a disposition that will probably soon ripen to it, and as to all the other colonies a century of free trade to them, such as France could either give or take away, would not be an indemnity for our losses. If, however, such a grant could be taken as a substitute for repayment, the reasoning of the sufferers would certainly be good, and the profits of the privilege ought to be applied to indemnify them. It would perhaps be possible to stipulate, that none of our vessels should enjoy the privilege, but such as should be provided with a license from our government, for which license a payment should be made to constitute a fund appropriated solely to the indemnity of the sufferers. But then the consequence would be to restrain instead of enlarging the trade. Indeed we have all that Pichon offers, and though a formal stipulation might secure us against a possible recall of the privilege, it would appear to our merchants to be no favor at all, or at most a very slight one.

. . . . . .

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

7 May, 1799.

My Dear Mother:

. . . . . .

The latest accounts we have from America announce three circumstances of no small importance — the appointment of a new commission to treat with France, the capture of the French frigate *l'Insurgente* by our frigate *Constellation*, and the symptoms of a new insurrection against the national government in the western part of Pennsylvania. Though we are informed that the appointment of the new commission was attended with great divisions in the public opinion concerning the expediency of the step, I trust that in the course of a few months it will be generally seen and acknowledged that the measure was proper and wise. The situation in which we stood before, halfway between peace and war, could not continue, and as the legislative body had thought proper not to declare war, I can see no substantial reason why the large advances made towards a new negotiation and the solicitations to that effect of the French government should be rejected. I have not indeed for my own part any opinion of the sincerity of their professions, and expect very little from their justice; nor do I suppose they have ability, if they had the inclination, to restore the property they have plundered from our merchants, or an indemnity for it. But I believe that negotiation at present may put a stop to further depredation, and that a more advantageous arrangement may be obtained than after a longer delay. After the close of ever so long a war we should have still less prospects of compensation for still greater losses, and there is no probability that there will be ever a period, when the desire of accommodation with us will be stronger

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than at present. This disposition will be confirmed by the capture of their frigate, which will tend to convince them that our naval power is not so contemptible as they have represented to the world and to themselves. Two years ago they published in a pamphlet, written undoubtedly at the command of the Directory, that all our sea captains were ignorant sots, and that since the death of Mr. Gillon[1] we could not call a single good sea officer into our service. I wish that the captains of all our frigates would give them proofs equally substantial, that our marine can furnish very good officers yet with that given by Commodore Truxtun. There is one in whom I have not the same confidence, and I am sorry he commands the *Boston* frigate. I have had occasion to know that he was utterly unfit for the station. I have lately heard that he has been dismissed. They have related the affair between the *Constellation* and *l'Insurgente* in the Paris papers with unusual modesty. They say that the frigate had 44 guns, but the American had 18-pounders and the French only twelves, so that the capture of the French ship was the *necessary result of her inferiority*. This circumstance is much less satisfactory to them, than the prospect of a new rebellion, which has manifested itself in Northumberland County, Pennsylvania. There is in that part of our country a spirit which I believe will never be suppressed but by force. "Though brutal that contest and foul," I very much fear we shall be forced to come to it, and when we do, have no doubt but the good cause will prove itself as superior to its opposers in it, as it always has in that of reason. Such things as these insurrections, however, injure very much the estimation of our country with the rest of the world, and give cause of exultation to our enemies in Europe, who are deficient neither in numbers nor virulence.

[1] Alexander Gillon (1741–1794).

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The spirit of party has indeed done so much injury among us in various shapes, that it has given our very national character an odious aspect in the eyes of many observing foreigners. The English newspapers last spring gave an account of the transactions of our national House of Representatives in the affairs between Lyon and Griswold, heading the relation in large characters with "American Manners." Porcupine's pamphlet exposing Judge M'Kean's conduct towards him was republished in England, and commented on under a title altered from the "Democratic" to the "Republican Judge."[1] His charge to the grand jury upon that occasion has been represented as a specimen of our judiciary proceedings, and it has been said with truth, that there is not a country in Europe, unless it be France, where a judge could so act and so speak, without condemning himself not only to universal infamy, but to forfeit his place. It is not however alone in England, where we may expect that everything to our disadvantage will find busy tongues and willing ears, that such things are circulated. Here in Germany a man by the name of Bülow,[2] after travelling twice in the United States has published two volumes entitled, "The Republic of North America in its present Condition." It is one continued libel upon the character and manners of the American people, written with considerable ingenuity. It contains beyond all doubt a vast deal of falsehood, but every American who feels for the honor of his country must confess with shame that it also contains too much of truth. The author's mode of collecting facts appears generally to have been, to gather from the newspapers

[1] Relating to the trial of Cobbett on a charge of libel against the King of Spain and his ambassador, Marquis d'Yrujo.

[2] Dietrich Heinrich, Freiher von Buelow, *Der Freistaat von Nordamerika in seinem neusten Zustand*, Berlin, 1797.

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and from private malignity all the abuse which the most inveterate partisans of opposite political sentiments have imputed reciprocally to each other, and to deal it out all as equally true and equally stigmatizing to the national character. The book has been a good deal read in Germany, and, as it has been two years published, would have been long since translated and published in England, did not the writer show himself as inimical to the English government as to the American people. I think it very probable that the work will some day or other find its way to the English press.

There has also been published within these few months, in English, in French, and in German, the travels of La Rochefoucault-Liancourt in the United States. He writes with the feelings of a Frenchman, and probably with a wish so far to recommend himself to the governing party in France as to obtain a permission to return. He discovers a proportionate degree of asperity against the English and their government, which appears to be somewhat embittered by an order from Lord Dorchester forbidding him to go into lower Canada. But with respect to Americans he discovers much candor, and speaks well of almost everybody. I inclose a translation of what he says about a person of our acquaintance which will perhaps amuse you.[1]

. . . . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 14 May, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I am not surprised that the federal party should be cool upon the subject of the appointment of a new commission. It was, and yet is, a measure of very doubtful success in *any*

[1] The visit to Quincy and John Adams, to be found in the London edition of 1799, I. 407. The character of Lord Dorchester is omitted.

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point of view. There are very great obstacles to its success in procuring a satisfactory settlement with France, and if it should fail, it is questionable whether it will make our people more willing for war than they were. I for my part view it as justifiable only in the consideration that the legislature would not at once come to plain and decisive war, and that the House of Representatives, without any necessity or occasion, had made a formal declaration against an alliance with England. To hang for months and years together upon the mere chapter of accidents, to ascertain whether we shall be at peace or war; and while we are suffering all that war can inflict, without using all its means of defence; to refuse obstinately every expedient that can settle us either on one side or the other, appears not to me the summit of political wisdom. I must hope, however, that your success will silence all clamors against either the measure or the man.

Porcupine's abuse I think you need not much heed. What there is of English influence among us will certainly be against you, and against our preserving peace. But I do not by any means consider that influence as formidable. No man of common sense and common candor will fasten upon you the suspicion which you seem to apprehend. The situation is by no means desirable, and I should have much more difficulty to believe you if you had assured me you were desirous of it, than I have when you tell me contrary.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

18 May, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I think you were perfectly right in writing to T[alleyrand] by the post. Much anxiety upon the subject is not now nec-

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essary on our part, and I hope the solicitude for an arrangement on the other side will have occasion constantly to increase. I have observed some late paragraphs in the Paris papers, much less insolent in their turn than has been usual heretofore. One signed *An American*, contradicting the report that the second nomination was rejected, pretending it was fabricated in England, and urging that such stories tend to discourage the French nation at a moment, when they comfort themselves under the check they receive in Europe with the hope of returning friendship with America. Another in the *Moniteur*, purporting to be an extract of a letter from Philadelphia, and saying that *the friends of our government are gaining strength*, and that the parties among us are much less heated than heretofore. . . .

TO RUFUS KING

BERLIN, 25 May, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I have received your favor of the 8th instant, and hear with satisfaction that the disturbances within the state of Pennsylvania [1] are not [as] serious in their nature, as from the accounts in the English papers, the only ones through which I had heard of them, there was reason to apprehend. An opposition to the laws must, however, be alarming, and this circumstance with many others proves the justness of your principle, that it is necessary for us to extend and consolidate the foundation of a national power. Upon this subject, however, experience seems to warrant the conclusion, that every step towards the attainment of an object so wise and patriotic, must be impelled by the pressure of an immediate

[1] Against the collection of the direct tax of 1798. McMaster, *History of the People of the United States*, II. 434.

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and urgent necessity. It is not generally in the character of nations to provide by present sacrifices against distant and contingent, however probable evils; we have proved to our very heavy cost that we are not entitled to consider ourselves as making an exception to this rule, and the proceedings on the part of France, which could alone have produced even the exertions which have been made with us, had so manifestly changed, that it would have been perhaps impossible to obtain any more extensive efforts from a legislature so extremely reluctant even at everything they have done, from a body of men, who under all the pressure of that time not only shrunk back from explicit war, but made a formal declaration against an alliance which, in case of war, as appears to me, it would have been unequivocal madness to reject.

Of the success of a new commission I am far from being sanguine in my expectations. Though the same difficulties will not prevent their admission, as their predecessors met with, there are others not less essential which will not be so easily superable. The course of events, so powerful in its influence upon the conduct of the French government, may swell into insolence, or sink into complaisance and accommodation their pretensions and their treatment of the ministers; but every possible change of fortune must be alike adverse to the satisfaction of our just claims of indemnity, since success will as inevitably take away the will, as defeat will deprive of the power to satisfy them. I do not apprehend any other important obstacle.

The removal of Rewbell from the Directory and the appointment of Sieyès I find are considered here, more than I consider them myself, as presages of a disposition towards peace. Sieyès has often told persons here, that he never would sit with Rewbell in the Directory, but has now ac-

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cepted, and left this place yesterday morning for Paris. When he was first chosen he gave as the reason of his refusal that a member of the Directory ought to have the confidence of all parties, whereas he had always been the antagonist of every party. He now accepts, though he had a bare majority of the votes in the Council of Five Hundred, and more than an hundred less than General Lefevre. He has professed here all along an ardent desire for peace, and has often disapproved the proceedings of the Directory.[1]

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

22 June, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

The reason why I said nothing to you concerning your correspondence with Paris was, because there occurred nothing to me to observe. Upon that peculiar point, the assurance of proper reception, I presumed there would be

[1] "I believe you mistake the character of Sieyès. He is not the man for the measures which you anticipate, neither do I believe him to be the deep man you have heard him pronounced. I have seen very little of him, while he was here, and have not heard much more. But all I have seen or heard concurs to prove that the bad passions have exclusive possession of his heart. I never heard him open his mouth but to utter ill nature. You will probably see and hear much more of him. But at the first sight, in the gloomy asperity of his features, and the deadly livid complexion of his countenance, you will trace the vultures that are incessantly gnawing at his breast." *To William Vans Murray*, June 1, 1799. Ms.

"I presume you have not had the happiness to witness the passage of the new Director. He took a more direct flight to his destination. But you will have opportunities to see more than enough of him, and to convince yourself that he is no *Warwick* on one side, whatever he may be on the other. The *great court* has never been upon good terms with him. He possessed nothing of the suaviter in modo, and was always as harsh in his forms as his mission, and any French republican mission to a monarchy is in substance. He professes to be very pacific in his disposition, and used to complain here that the Directory did not sufficiently adhere to the constitution. Yet you know he was the real father of the 18th Fructidor." *To William Vans Murray*, June 8, 1799. Ms.

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no difficulty. If T[alleyrand] made the speech which you have heard of, I believe he was very near the truth. That the Directory do not sincerely desire peace with us is beyond a doubt, and I know that if our government think as I do, and the public mind were firm, and united, and decisive, as it ought to be, war the Directory should have, until they did most sincerely wish peace and give the proofs of it. If our public mind were properly toned, I have no more doubt that war would be our true policy, than that it would be glorious to us in the event.

I am happy to hear again from my friend Hahn, and, by the way, can you tell what has become of his formal complaint at Philadelphia, and that of his colleagues against your predecessor at the Hague, for hinting that *France* had some small influence over their conduct as Batavian statesmen? I have never heard of this complaint from home, but I still regret that they had ever occasion to make it.[1] I did not know that H[ahn] was a disciple of the ingenious professor

[1] "As to H[ahn] and the dust about your dispatch. I had the whole benefit of it, so I beg you to take the brunt of some such thing for me, particularly if you can find a revolutionary state of things anywhere to give activity to impertinence, and some great nation to play the part of brother Bruin behind poor Jerry Sneak, who each moment looks around with a 'stand by me brother Bruin,' and is exceedingly warm and dignified. In fact I had orders to soften off the edges without yielding substance — words, mere words. I waited till they sent their letter to me. It was less absolute than I had expected from H[ahn]'s bow-wow talk. I then assured them of respect, amity, etc., and necessity of publishing, etc., etc., and then demanded of them if they could possibly justify to our Government certain expressions in their letter to you, which must have excited much feeling — 'advise your Government to assert its flag from the daily insults it receives from England.' Whether it was not unfit language to a Government, or even to an individual to pretend to awaken a sense of honor against *daily insults*. In fact I made as good a battle in the retreat as I could by attacking them in turn, and never have I heard of it. Alas! In a little time Charles Le Croix justified and new painted every line you had written by packing them off to the House in the Wood, and other places." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, June 28, 1799. Ms.

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of Königsberg, who preaches atheism and revolution in such hard words that the honest Germans imagine they do not understand him.[1] They are in a predicament something like Cromwell's gentry, who thought he was seeking the Lord, when he was only seeking a corkscrew. The professor of the *royal* university seeks to spread *atheism* and revolution, and at the same time to keep his place. I believe this is the true glossary to his hard words.

Notwithstanding your excellent story of the parson and the wreck I believe with H[ahn] that the new director [Sieyès] is incorruptible, that is, that his passion is not money. The same credit was due to Robespierre. But our king tamer has not the most delicate ideas upon the subject of money, since he presented an hundred ducats to an officer sent by this government to attend him to the frontiers. The officer was much mortified and perplexed whether to refuse or accept it. He concluded, however, to take it; whether from the philosophical consideration that after all an hundred ducats were an acceptable thing, or that he did not dare refuse a present from the great Director, I shall not determine.

Adieu. No news of any consequence.

TO RUFUS KING

BERLIN, 2 July, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The result of the elections in Virginia and at New York is the more agreeable, after the ill-portending measures of the Virginia legislature last winter. I find by the newspapers, which I have seen to the 8th of May, that the measure of sending a new commission to France was strongly disap-

[1] Immanuel Kant.

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proved by many friends of the government, and see by some English very ministerial papers that it is likewise much censured in England. Just at this time, to be sure, Mr. Pitt feels himself strong and sanguine enough, to avow his satisfaction at the failure of Lord Malmesbury's two embassies; but his writers have not the best grace in finding fault with another government, for sending a new mission before reparation was made for indignities to a former one. When Lord Malmesbury went to Lille the Directory had made no apologies for sending him away from Paris; nor had they manifested any disposition to reduce their demands, or to indemnify England for any of their injuries. Mr. Pitt says he was then obliged by the strong desire of the people for peace to open those negotiations; but the desire of our people for peace, and their aversion against a war with France, are much stronger than they ever could be in England. And although both the empires are seriously engaged in war against France, and have commenced it with an uncommonly splendid career of success, there are few persons who would be surprised if, within no very distant time, Mr. Pitt should again find it expedient to send a minister, and solicit peace without insisting upon either preliminary indemnities or apologies. . . .

I am &c.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 3 July, 1799.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

I received not until last evening your kind favor of February 10, which however is the latest date I have from you, and this circumstance is of itself sufficient to give me great concern respecting the state of your health. The Boston newspapers in April mention likewise, that you were again ill;

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but I have some comfort in hearing by a letter from Dr. Welsh to his son, that you were again tolerably well at the last of April. I have likewise a few lines from my brother Thomas, dated May 11, at Baltimore.

From the accounts we receive of the turn which the elections have taken in Virginia, we are induced to hope that the politics of that state are becoming more correct, than they have been for some time past. I have seen, however, a publication by Mr. Giles, in which he avows the opinion that a separation from the Union would be better, than submission to the alien and sedition laws, the navy and army.[1] Such an opinion acknowledged by any citizens of the United States is alarming. The example of talking about a separation rather than submit to this, that or the other law, which may be obnoxious in particular districts or states, is dangerous. A separation is the greatest calamity that can befall us, and is alike to be deprecated by us all. Nothing could make it excusable, and we can never be safe so long as any attempt for it shall not be considered as treason. But of all follies, that would be the weakest which should withdraw from the union, to avoid taking a share in a navy and an army. For in such case the union would be divided into two nations, the one having a considerable armed force, and the other none. The shallowest understanding must see, that the existence of the weak party would be forever at the mercy of the strong one, and that it would instantly and forcibly be perceived. Such a condition would so little suit a Virginian spirit, that they would infallibly raise very shortly army against army, navy against navy, and the separated

[1] "The real object of the leading Jacobins has been declared. Giles, at the house of Mr. Burwell at Richmond, said expressly that he desired that the union of the States might be severed. He has attempted a denial; but Mr. Burwell, a man of veracity and fair reputation, positively confirms the charge." *Pickering to Rufus King*, May 4, 1799. *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, III. 13.

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part alone would be oppressed with a burthen heavier than the whole of that, which it would now refuse to share. So that the question for Virginia and every other state or parcel of the union is not, whether they shall choose an army and navy, or a separation without them, but whether they shall maintain an army and navy, in common with the rest of the union, or by themselves apart and alone; whether they shall bear in common the burthen of a common defensive protection against foreign nations, or the same burthen wholly to themselves, and for protection not only against foreigners, but against that part of the union from which they shall have withdrawn.

I find, likewise, that there was brought forward as a candidate for the office of Governor of Pennsylvania a man[1] whose name, if it should ever reach future times, will only be quoted with those of Jeffreys[2] and Page.[3] Jeffreys, the independent spirited chancellor of James the second, and Page the no less independent spirited judge, who treated the poet Savage much as the candidate treated Peter Porcupine. Peter[4] has chastised the candidate more severely still than the poet chastised Page. Yet such is the purity of some of our elections (as the annals of Pennsylvania at least as much as those of any other state can show) that I shall not be surprised at all to hear that the independent spirited candidate was chosen.

Peter himself is indeed not always correct, either in his facts, his opinions, or his principles, and I am sorry to observe that with all his good qualities he is rather intolerant, and not sufficient careful to confine his censure within the limits

[1] Thomas McKean (1734–1817), governor of Pennsylvania, 1799–1808.

[2] George Jeffreys (1648–1689).

[3] Sir Francis Page (1661–1741). Richard Savage was brought before him for the murder of James Sinclair. Johnson, *Works*, X. 307.

[4] Cobbett.

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of justice. Peter says and swears that a century consists of ninety-nine years. Now although Peter may, if he thinks proper, square all his chronological calculations upon this system, I think it rather hard that every man must be set down irrevocably for a fool or a knave, who prefers the round number for the amount of a century. Peter tells us further, that when he commenced newspaper editor, in order to avoid prosecution the principle that he adopted was, that he might *go as great lengths* in attacking the enemies of the government, as certain other editors went in attacking its friends. A learned casuist of the last century says:

> For if the devil to serve his turn
> Can tell truth; why the saints should scorn
> When it serves theirs to swear and lye,
> I think there's little reason why.

But Peter's argument is an improvement even upon this ingenious logic. His reasoning is, that the saints may swear and lye to serve their turn, not because the devil sometimes tells truth, but because he generally swears and lies to serve his. He is for imitating the devil's general rules, rather than his exceptions, and of course claims a much larger and more liberal privilege of falsehood and profanity, than the saints of Butler's. Peter has found that his principles would not even answer to protect him from prosecution; but what ought to be a much more useful discovery to him is, that the principle itself is bad; that however the *Aurora* or *Argus* may have poured forth streams of filth and calumny against the cause of order and the friends of virtue, he should not have thought himself therefore justified, in uttering filth or calumny, even against the worst of causes or of men, much less against every measure and every person that happened to vary in single points from Peter's opinion of good policy.

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I am convinced that his publications have done much good in our country, and I heartily wish that many of our well meaning printers, instead of engaging themselves in silly and unequal contests with him, would catch a little of his wit and humor. Young Fenno[1] appears to have taken him for his model, but not being blessed with so strong nerves he gets discouraged at the first public measure which happens not to coincide with his ideas, and I observe has given up his paper, with an address discovering very considerable abilities, as well as some useless peevishness and some youthful petulance. I have seen this performance in the English Anti-Jacobin Reviews at full length under the title of "Fenno's View of the United States of America." The English editor seized it with avidity, because it contained a libel upon our country and its government. To such things from the pen of Peter Porcupine I know not what can be objected, while he avows himself an Englishman and keeps within the bounds of law. We ought to derive benefit from being told of our faults, and we know what allowance to make for the prejudices of a foreigner. But an American ought to treat his country with more delicacy and respect. He may censure with severity, whenever he thinks he can contribute to reform, but his censure should always be attended by the tenderness of friendship. He may be a satirist but not a lampooner.[2]

[1] John Ward Fenno, son of and successor to John Fenno, founder of the *Gazette of the United States*. The son's manifesto was reprinted as *Desultory Reflections on the New Political Aspects of Public Affairs in the United States of America, since the Commencement of the Year 1799*. New York, printed: Philadelphia, reprinted: 1800.

[2] "The new mission was at first received with more than coolness. Cobbett abused it with all his characteristic virulence, and young Fenno gives it as a reason for throwing up his paper. He published a long piece, a vindication of his resignation written with much fire and animation, though with some boyish turgidness, in which he utters many bold truths, but where he employs the gloomiest colors to

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The new commission appointed to treat with France appears not to have had at first the approbation of many persons in America, the most friendly to the government. Although there is much reason to doubt whether it will be successful in making such an arrangement as [we] could wish, and as we should in justice be entitled to, I am satisfied that the measure was wise and conformable to the best interests of our country. The commission will find a change almost total of the men at the head of the French government since the former negotiation. One of the Directors, Rewbell, is gone out by the constitutional yearly rotation; one (Treilhard) has been dismissed as unconstitutionally elected, and two (Merlin and Larevellière) have resigned to avoid being turned out, or used still more harshly. The legislative councils have just discovered that these Directors have been for eighteen months the tyrants of France, and have supplied their places with four new directors (Sieyès, Roger Ducos, Gohier and Moulins), who are to repair all the mischief done by their predecessors, and to bring forth *golden days* fruitful of *golden deeds*, to help them in which work the Director Barras is the only one deemed sufficiently virtuous to keep his place.

This new cast of characters for performing the tragical farce of French revolutions took place on the 17th or 18th of the last month, and on the same three days a succession of battles was fought in Italy by the Austrian and Russian armies under Suwarrow, against the French forces under Macdonald, in the result of which the French were defeated, and lost in killed, wounded and prisoners, about 8000 men.

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paint the errors and frailties of this country. His language may possibly be justified by the necessity of the case, but there is nothing else can excuse it. To discover the nakedness of a parent for any other purpose than that of healing his wounds, is abominable." *To William Vans Murray*, June 25, 1799. Ms.

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TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

9 July, 1799.

To your long letter of March 4–12, I ought to say something more than is merely contained in mine of the 1st instant in answer, without waiting for your letter by way of England written in the beginning of May, which I have not yet received. Yesterday a couple of small packets of newspapers and cuttings, dated February and March, came to hand, which I suppose you sent with your letter from Quincy.

I am glad to see at last, what I had before heard of, Porcupine's abuse upon the appointment of a new commission to negotiate with France; he seems to have taken it very much in dudgeon and seriously threatens the government, and especially the President, to withdraw from them his powerful patronage and not very gracious protection.[1] He has a good hand at ribaldry, and having in general supported honest and honorable principles, has been useful in lashing with his coarse scourge men who would have been insensible to more delicate punishment. Poor Webster owns and complains that Peter's Gazette is the most popular newspaper in the Union, and it is not difficult to perceive the reason why. Let the other papers assume as much vivacity, as much wit, and as much decision, and they will soon get into greater vogue themselves.

[1] "I have likewise now seen Porcupine's abuse of you, but he abuses the President yet more, tells him he will lose all his friends, and threatens if he does not behave better, no longer to support a government that is *forever recoiling*. What he most laughs at you for is, for having said in a debate upon the old alien law, that you feared the great influx of foreigners would corrupt the *purity* and the simplicity of the American character. Thus this fellow sneers at our national character as much as at individuals, has done so boldly and openly for years with impunity, and yet complains that our press is not free." *To William Vans Murray*, July 9, 1799. Ms.

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Peter is certainly wrong when he complains that the liberty of the press is not enjoyed in America, in so high a degree as in England. If an American should go to London and set up a daily newspaper, and fill it from one week's end to another with abuse however ingenious and witty upon the English king, Parliament, judges and people, upon their friends and allies, upon every man and measure which should cross his own ideas of right, or his national partialities as an American, Lord Kenyon would very shortly send him to muse upon the liberty of the press in the king's bench prison, or a cockney mob would spare the courts of justice all trouble about him, by breaking his head and pulling down his printing shop about his ears.

The impression which the new commission first made upon many of our federalists at home, I cannot very easily account for. At the last session of Congress, amidst all the indignities heaped upon the former negotiators, and all the injuries practised in their utmost extremes upon our commerce, Congress did not choose to go to war; and yet when negotiation was solicited on the part of France, was it to be rejected? As to those who talk of making France pay for all her plunder, and ask pardon upon her knees for her robberies, they should at least show how we could have effected such a purpose by war. What the result of this mission will be I know not; but it will certainly be better than we could have hoped from the most favorable issue of a war that could have happened. The only harm that the negotiation could produce, would be a relaxation of our preparations for war, which would indeed be the most extreme bad policy. For it would be the most infallible means of defeating the success of the commission. All negotiation with France, that is not supported by a real and visible force, must be mockery. The more of her frigates we take,

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the more likely our ministers will be to succeed in their mission.

Before the two gentlemen who are to come from America shall arrive, a complete change of men may perhaps have taken place in the French government. Four of the five directors have already been displaced within these two months. They are now universally called at Paris the tyrants of France. The operation of their removal is called a *cisalpinade*. It was done by the legislative councils, who thus give a counterpart to the 18th Fructidor. According to all appearances the time is not far distant, when the *rubber game* between those two powers will be decided. The general charge upon the ex-directors is for *dilapidations*, and the virtuous Barras is the only one of them left in his place. Rewbell went out by lot at the time of the annual election. He carried off from the Luxembourg 1200 livres worth of furniture belonging to the public, which he has since been obliged to restore, and his sons appropriated to themselves the horses of the nation.[1] The new directors, besides Sieyès, are three Jacobins as virtuous as Barras. Two of the ministers (of the police[2] and interior) have likewise been changed, but the virtuous Talleyrand remains, and the report that he is to come as minister to this court is not yet confirmed.

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[1] "The French papers say that *Rapinat* is the positive, *Forfait*, the comparative, and *Rewbell* the superlative in everything relative to robbery." *To William Vans Murray*, July 16, 1799. Ms.

[2] Joseph Fouché came into this office.

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TO RUFUS KING[1]

BERLIN, 15 July, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I received last evening your favor of the 2nd instant, with some inclosed letters from America, for transmitting which I am obliged to you. The late change at Paris is, I believe, merely a change of men; whatever change of principles, or rather of practice, has yet appeared is, if anything, a change for the worse. Forced loans within and a renovation of piracy without signalize the virtuous regeneration of councils this time. The plunderings of the old directors were obnoxious only as they stood in the way of other plunderers, who being leaner were more voracious, as the famished wolf is more dangerous than the one already gorged with blood.

I believe that the assurances of a proper reception for our new commissioners are made through Mr. Murray to our own executive, who will judge of their validity, and I have no doubt, but they will be as full and ample as can be desired. But I am not without some doubts, whether the result of the late change of actors at Paris will not be unpropitious, and after seeing the Council of Five Hundred ten days ago repeal the ratification of a treaty, I see little encouragement to place much dependence upon the public faith of the present ruling party.[1]

[1] In May instructions were prepared for Mr. King for a treaty with Russia, and laid before the President, who wrote to Pickering; "I pray you to send a copy of these instructions to Mr. Adams at Berlin, and give him fresh instructions to agree with Prussia and Sweden both, in this instruction relative to the article of contraband of war, or to agree to the old article of contraband in our former treaties with those powers. I am determined to make no further difficulty with either of these powers about the article of contraband, provided they will agree to the old one." May 13, 1799. *Works of John Adams*, VIII. 647.

On July 11 was signed a treaty of amity and commerce between Prussia and the United States, thus accomplishing the object of Adams' mission. "The treaty

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I have not seen either of the letters of Barlow or Skipwith which you mention, but I know that they have been trying to intrigue a little with the ex-Directory to get L. F.[1] sent to America. I suppose they worked in concert with L. F.'s friends at Paris, and I believe that he himself would have been glad if they had succeeded. He says the mission was offered him, but he refused to go without knowing what they meant to do by way of reparation towards us. But Dr. Logan says that L. F. procured for him the permission to go to Paris.

L. F. talks about universal liberty and the rights of man, just as he did in 1789. Whether his understanding or his heart must answer for this, I am unable to say.[2] La Roche-

with Prussia was at length signed on the 11th instant, and though we have been so long about it, most of the articles are copied verbatim from the old treaty. The principal difficulty was in the alteration of the twelfth article. I was ordered to propose a change in it, and the old article was very strenuously adhered to here. The rule at length agreed upon is, to observe the acknowledged Law of Nations, instead of the former stipulation. The other changes are a list of contraband, (the same as that of the treaties between Great Britain and Russia,) a variation of the salvage for recaptures; a specification of the papers necessary for the vessels of the neutral party in time of war; a provision against such a transaction as occurred in the *Wilmington Packet*, a removal of the exemption of merchant vessels from capture in time of war, a subjection to general embargoes, and the omission of the clause in the former treaty in favor of France, instead of which a clause is introduced conformable to the engagements of our late treaty with England." *To William Vans Murray*, July 13, 1799. Ms.

"I ought to tell you that in the last *Publiciste* your treaty is spoken of as very favorable to Prussian interests in respect to Silesia linens, as they would like doubtless to aid their *party* by hints against your treaty, for anything to divide suits them. I mention this that you may know that some one at Paris has got hold of that point, and of course you will take care of your details if any may be necessary to be sent to our friends on that point." *William Vans Murray to John Quincy Adams*, August 2, 1799. Ms.

[1] Lafayette.

[2] "And first with respect to General Fairfax [Lafayette] and his projects, you know what I think of him and them. If the choice depended upon me, I should rather, both for his sake and ours, that he should not go. But yet, the man is not

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foucault-Liancourt is such another. He has been publishing his travels in the United States, in which out of pure philanthropy and tender hearted benevolence, he has betrayed General Simcoe's confidence to reward his hospitality;[1] has returned the numerous obligations conferred upon him by Englishmen with continual marks of bitterness and malice against the English nation; and has paid his unwearied obeisances to the French tyrants, who had robbed him of everything but life, and from whom he saved that only by flight. These people are lambs to every butcher, and vipers to every benefactor.[2]

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so important in the scale of being, as he imagines himself, or as the superficial popularity, which he has not yet lost in America, makes him appear to us. It is *almost* indifferent whether he stay or go, and if he should go, not very material whether he adhere to his present system of American politics, or plunge again into the filth of Jacobinism. The difference is but of a little more, or a little less turbulence and folly exhibited to the world. I should not think it worth while very *earnestly* to dissuade him from going, more especially as you may be sure that if he does go, it will be with extreme reluctance. All his hopes, such as they are, and indeed all his powerful and active passions draw him back. If he possibly can, I am sure he will stay." *To William Vans Murray*, August 31, 1799. Ms.

[1] See *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, III. 230.

[2] On July 17 Adams and his wife left Berlin for Dresden and Töplitz. They returned to Berlin October 12. In the summer victory seemed to be with the Allies, for the French armies were everywhere receiving checks and defeats. When he again reached Berlin the conditions had changed in a startling manner, and the French had won on every side.

"I was sure that the new commission was not intended to be a mere form, not to be followed up. Such a measure, with such a design, would be as repugnant to the President's character as light to darkness. He meant the thing to have all the effect it could, but if at the time it were possible that it could have been successful, I know not what influence the late changes of men in France will have there, especially as Talleyrand's going out may probably produce an alteration in the policy towards America. I hear from Mr. King, that P. Henry is dead." *To William Vans Murray*, August 13, 1799. Ms.

Not until September 4 did Pickering write to Murray that the assurances transmitted from Talleyrand were considered as a substantial compliance with the President's requisitions; and that the envoys, Ellsworth and Davie, were directed to prepare for their voyage. This intelligence reached Murray on November 6.

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TO JOSEPH HALL

BERLIN, 19 November, 1799.

MY DEAR SIR:

I received with great pleasure a few days ago your favor of 24 September. Having been absent from this place during three months of the summer, it was but very lately I had seen in Boston papers your election to represent that town in the General Court, and that of our friend Frazier, a circumstance which in an high degree gratified my feelings both of friendship and patriotism.

I am highly obliged to you for the view of public affairs contained in your letter, and for the candid observations of your own with which it is accompanied.[1] In our internal situation there are many parts of the prospect, which have very much improved since last I had the pleasure of seeing you, and although our foreign concerns still remain complicated and entangled with many difficulties and some dangers, we have yet ample reason to rely upon the bounties of providence and our own united prudence and energies, to

[1] "The information, experience, observation and judgment of our Executive are recognized by all. Yet his nomination of the envoy to France last session produced a wonderful ferment in the minds of the best men among us. His independence in originating the measure without consulting those around him not only piqued the pride of individuals, but was softly censured by other persons of some weight and unconnected with those individuals. It was observed that however competent the present magistrate was to act independently of the other officers of the government, yet the precedent was a pernicious one, and might deduce at a future period consequences fatal to the repose and happiness of the people. The conscious rectitude and just self-respect of the man have, however, I believe, induced him still to follow the dictates of his pure enlightened mind, but has I fear engendered a want of confidence and a degree of coolness that ought not to exist among the great officers of any government. Still from the known talents and patriotism of each and all of them, the mischief will not, I presume, be serious, nor the commonwealth suffer in her important interest." *Joseph Hall to John Quincy Adams*, Boston, September 24, 1799. Ms.

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extricate us from them. I was not surprised to find that the measure of sending a new mission to France had appeared to you, as to many other true and intelligent Americans, at least of questionable policy. Its ultimate effect is yet very uncertain, and the course of events alone can show whether it was really advisable or not. I have perhaps no title to the credit of an impartial judgment in the case, but the step appeared to me from the first expedient upon the following grounds. First, because there was, both on our part and that of the French government, a clear and unequivocal aversion to a formally declared war, and because that aversion, founded upon the unquestionable interests and loudly pronounced sentiments of both nations, was of itself a substantial ground for hope that peace might be restored by negotiation, and at least such terms of good understanding as would be consistent with our spirit and character as a perfectly independent nation. Secondly, because the expediency of treating at all being admitted, I believed on many accounts it would be more advantageous to us to treat by an American mission in France, than by a French mission in America. And as from a paltry scruple of pride and shame alone the Directory were restrained from sending a minister to Philadelphia, it seemed to me our policy to let them enjoy the humor as long as they pleased, and esteem ourselves fortunate that it would save us from the danger of having in the midst of us that universal firebrand, called a French minister. Thirdly, because the internal revolutions of men at the head of affairs in France are so frequent, that it seemed prudent to have ministers there to be at hand, in case any more favorable chance for a successful negotiation should be occasionally produced. There is, for instance, at this moment, not one man in the Directory who was a member of that body, when our former commission was so shamefully

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treated. An entirely new set of men are in action, and they are the first to cry down the conduct of their predecessors. A mission to France even now would doubtless meet with many great obstacles to a satisfactory negotiation, but at least all the foul and dirty passions and personalities of Merlin, Larevellière and Barras will have disappeared. These men have all been ignominiously driven from office, and the unanimous voice of France proclaims them to be just what we found them when at the zenith of their power. Fourthly, I considered the measure as wise in respect to its effects upon our relations towards England, who will certainly think us in her power, and treat us accordingly, in proportion as she sees the door of reconciliation between us and France shut. Accordingly, the new mission from America has been nowhere so severely censured as by the creatures and dependants of the English ministry. The very beings who had seen with applause Lord Malmesbury go to supplicate peace at Paris, and after being spurned from thence, return to kiss the rod and be spurned again from Lille, tell us forsooth, that it was disgraceful for America to send a new embassy, until the injuries and insults to the former had been atoned and repaired. The motives of these gentlemen are apparent, and the very reasons why they look at the embassy with aversion and jealousy are among the strongest to prove its expediency to minds and hearts truly American.

The objection that the measure ought not to have been taken without consulting the officers of government, I cannot be prepared to answer, because it is only from your letter and the public prints, that I have been informed the fact was so. But if it be contended as a principle, that the President ought not to take any important step without consulting the other officers of government, (by which I suppose you mean the heads of departments,) I cannot admit it as

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conformable either to the spirit or to the letter of the Constitution. Such a system in effect would make our executive a Directory of five or six persons, and the President of the United States would be merely the President of a Council. Now if there be any case in which the President ought to omit the consultation, it must be surely in cases when he knows that the advice of the persons to be consulted would be *against* the measure which he proposes, and this the same public papers which have spoken of the transaction intimate was the case in the present instance. That the omission should have occasioned a want of confidence or a coolness on the part of the officers of government, is a matter of very serious regret. But probably the same or a greater coolness must have arisen, had they been consulted and the measure adopted against their advice. For after all the President must have decided according to his own conviction of expediency, which was as it appears decidedly in favor of the new mission.

The extraordinary career of success with which the allies were favored during the greatest part of the campaign now closing, and the series of defeats suffered by the French, might tend more than ever to render questionable this measure, if it were wise at all to calculate our political measures upon the unstable fortune of war. The great defeat of the Austrians and Russians in Switzerland towards the close of September, and their subsequent expulsion from that country, together with the more than shameful issue of the expedition under the Duke of York against Holland, have in a great measure restored the balance of affairs; and although the event of the campaign hitherto has been to rescue Italy for the moment from the hands of France, yet the vital spirit of the coalition has already been so weakened, that it may very probably expire before the end of the win-

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ter, or offer an easy prey to the superior energy of the French at the opening of the ensuing season. It is, indeed, not yet certain, whether a winter campaign will not anticipate the events which may properly be expected in the course of the next year.

I shall not attempt to give you an account of the new revolution which has taken place at Paris, because we have yet only confused accounts of it here, and because you will have a detail of it by the way of England earlier than my letter can reach you. Hitherto it only appears that the Directory have again recovered by the means of an armed force that supreme control over the legislative councils, which their predecessors lost in May last, and that in order to remove the councils from the influence and protection of the Parisian Jacobins, they have made them transfer the place of their meetings to St. Cloud; that Barras has resigned and taken himself away, and that Buonaparte and Sieyès are to be lords of the ascendant. . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

10 December, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

The example first set by the Jacobins with us, and afterwards adopted openly and professedly by Porcupine, of pouring forth personal abuse without any measure of decency or of truth, has so totally degraded the character of our newspaper speculations in the mind of every man, who has any remains either of taste or of delicacy, that I am somewhat surprised you should take so much to heart anything which appears in those kennels of pollution. Porcupine declares that it was his principle from the first to go as great lengths against the Jacobins, as their prints went against

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honest men. His practice has gone further even than his professions. For, as he has made his own passions the test of political honesty in other men, and his own ignorance and prejudices the measure of their information and candor, he has repeatedly let loose all his coarse virulence against men and measures which were most subservient to his own cause. His example and its success have been the stumbling stone of young Fenno, who from an ingenious schoolboy was by the unhappy death of his father suddenly turned into the editor of a newspaper, and now with all the ignorance, and presumption, and peevish impatience of infancy waxing into manhood, decides upon public transactions of the deepest interest and most intricate complication.[1]

That the new mission to France had any effect whatever in favor of McKean's or Monroe's election (if the last has taken place) I do not believe. Surely the elections of Pennsylvania have been for several years past conducted in such a manner as requires no extraordinary circumstance to account for the issue in this case. And surely the Virginia Legislature which passed the famous resolutions of last winter could neither be stimulated to, nor deterred from such a choice as Monroe by the proposal for a new negotiation with France. Had this mission not been determined on I, for my own part, am convinced, not only that those two elections would have turned out in the same manner, but that the men would have been much more dangerous in their stations than they will be now.

I have not seen any critique upon your communications with the French government; but there are so many people among us who mistake insolence for dignity that I should pay very little regard to censure upon the ground of too much

[1] Refers to a severe attack on the mission in Fenno's newspaper of October 19, 1799.

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supposed civility in your expressions. You remember with what violence the same charge was sounded against Mr. Jay's correspondence with Lord Grenville. Upon the whole I still cherish the hope that time and events will bring back all the good men and true to the expediency of this measure. But if not, if one part of the federal party will split from the other upon the system of driving at all events for war with France because there was a time when war would have been perfectly justifiable, I shall have no hesitation in quitting them, be the consequences what they may. I have never considered the cause of honor and virtue in our country as standing upon so rotten a basis as concealed, much less disguised, motives. Nor do I believe now.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

15 December, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

I had understood that the Colonel [Pickering] disapproved altogether of the new mission to France, and he has even intimated in a letter to me that he thought there was a kind of *infatuation* in the mere idea of treating with those people. It is therefore possible, and I hope is the case, that his letter censuring the expressions of your letter to T[alleyrand] was not anything more than his own sentiments. For my part I must consider objections against the "humble servant" at the bottom of a letter, as the cavils of a captious, or at least of an angry mind. It seems to me that you *were* sufficiently known to the French Government for all the purposes of the measure which you took. It was, I think, to all intents and purposes an official act, so performed by you — so received by them. But the close of the letter was in

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words of mere form, and the assurance of your pleasure in transmitting the message of your government mere civility.

I am convinced that much of the federal Jacobinism which you mention is the operation among us of *English* influence. For there is among us a great deal of it, as we see upon every occasion when our government adopts measures not concurring with English policy. It extends often to persons who, though pure and honest Americans at heart, are misled by too much faith in English statements of public affairs and English ministerial arguments. This is the case of young Fenno, who believes through thick and thin in the gospel of Porcupine and the "true Briton," and, being at a time of life when he doubts of nothing, undertakes to give his wise lessoning to the executive of the United States. . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

20 December, 1799.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I had been told here that La F[ayette] went to Paris, not only without invitation, but without leave, and that he had been ordered by the Consuls to remove at least to the distance of twelve leagues from the capital. I think with L[liancourt], that by discovering his longings for power again he will only make himself ridiculous.

There is probably another reason why L[liancourt] hates Colonel P[ickering] besides that which he told you.[1] It is because the Colonel is not enough of a Frenchman. The same motives would defeat all the eloquence you could bestow to convince him or any Frenchman in office of the Presi-

[1] Because Pickering had "justified the murder of Louis XVI to the Indians after the reign of terror was known in 1794, and now is bitter against the French for cruelty."

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dent's moderation towards France. They all hate the man, and have done so ever since the days of Vergennes, who never forgave him his independent spirit, while old Franklin was crouching like a spaniel at his feet. In one of the latest *Rédacteurs* I see that a paragraph, under the date of New York, pretends that several States had sent remonstrances to Congress against the President's partial measures respecting the French.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

6 January, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I am much obliged to you for a copy of your letter to the President. I do not imagine that the explanation was necessary for him, and I cannot believe that he partook of the Colonel's[1] dissatisfaction concerning the manner of address in your letter to Talleyrand. Your style in that case probably displeased only those who disapproved of the mission itself. Now I have had an intimation that some of our federalists thought the quarrel with France ought upon motives of policy to be kept open; but as we do not concur in that opinion, and heartily wish for an honorable accommodation, we must be content to differ in the detail from those who are already at variance with us upon the principle. The French newspapers assure us that the piratical law of January, 1798, has been repealed, and that privateering affairs have been placed upon the footing of the ordinance of July, 1778. After this I know not even upon what pretext we could continue to refuse negotiation.

I have not written home anything speculative upon the new French constitution. With respect to theories it seems

[1] Pickering.

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to me that whoever is not settled by a mere perusal of this new code is far beyond the reach of all comment or argument. The government of Turkey or China might be introduced tomorrow to France, and provided it were ushered in with a proper seasoning of the words liberty, equality, republic, and representative system, it would serve the purpose of *our* Jacobins as well, and perhaps better than the constitution of 1793. The popular elections in France will for the future, to be sure, be less than the shadow of a shade. But the permanency of this establishment is yet very questionable. It is impossible it should be really satisfactory to the nation although they will adopt it almost unanimously. But as mere *force* must carry it on, it is yet too weak as a government, and must fall like its predecessors. As to the old constitution of the French monarchy, I know as little about it as you, perhaps less. I only remember the answer of a Frenchman of wit and learning to my father, who inquired what was the best book upon the French constitution: "Monsieur, c'est l'Almanach Royal." . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No 160 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 14 January, 1800.

SIR:

I have the honor to inclose the copy of a note which I received a few days ago from Baron Engeström, the Swedish Minister at this court, containing a proposal for the employment of a number of frigates in the Mediterranean in concert between the United States, Sweden and Denmark, an object, which he assured me, the King of Sweden had peculiarly at heart. As all the security which our navigation can enjoy in the Mediterranean by virtue of any treaty

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with the Barbary powers must be precarious, and as even to obtain that security we have submitted to an expense so much more considerable than had ever before been applied to that purpose by any European power, this proposal appears to deserve the peculiar attention of the government.[1]

The Swedish Minister inquired at the same time, whether I had received any answer to another proposal which I transmitted about a year ago, relative to the island of St. Bartholomew. I told him that I had not, but that I presumed the answer would be such as I anticipated at the time when the proposal was communicated.

On the 3rd instant died here very suddenly, at the age of eighty-five, Count Finckenstein, first minister in the department of foreign affairs, a station which he had held upwards of half a century. He was undoubtedly the oldest diplomatic character in Europe, having entered the career in the year 1735, when he was sent as Minister to Sweden by the predecessor of Frederick the Great. He had signed several dispatches to the ministers abroad on the day of his death. There will probably be for the future only two ministers in the department, at the head of which will be the late Baron Alvensleben, whom the King has now made a Count.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

January 25, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

The Russian troops[2] are finally and decidedly recalled, excepting those in Italy, and those in the Island of Guernsey. This is owing partly to the misunderstandings between the

[1] See *Works of John Adams*, IX. 63.

[2] These latter were intended for a descent upon Holland.

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two imperial courts, which is greater than ever; and partly to the situation of the troops themselves, who are in a state of almost total dissolution from all discipline. So that Vienna will now have its hands entirely free to cut up Italy with France just as it pleases.

There is no more comparison between the powers of a President of the United States and a premier consul, than between the character of Washington and Buonaparte. It is satisfactory to see them returning to their veneration for our venerable patriot and hero, whose fame stands upon too durable foundations for them to shake. But it is truly sickening to hear the first voice of utterance from the tribunal to be mere declamatory adulation to the idol of fourteen days, which would have been worthy of a Roman Senator in the days of Tiberius. Riouffe [1] was a fanatic Girondist, and to see him turn to a parasite is no wonder. But why Benjamin Constant, who in one of his pamphlets lays down as a serious maxim that when impious men bear sway it is a duty to flatter them, — why he should be the first to break a lance against the demi-god, is not so easily accountable. You must however allow me, notwithstanding the change of bon ton, to make some account not only of the suicide Cato, but of the parricide Brutus. I despise and abhor every application of the *principles* upon which they acted to modern times and French affairs as much as any one — the cases must stand by themselves. But the inalienable right of individual virtue to withdraw itself from the power of an usurping tyrant, or of removing the tyrant himself when there is no other resource left, I have not yet in theory resigned.

Beurnonville arrived here a few days ago with his two adjutants. His two secretaries had arrived here before him.

[1] Honoré-Jean Riouffe (1764–1813).

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Adieu, my dear sir, I hope you will find at Paris a better climate than you have yet known in Europe; at least you will meet a less repulsive national character than you have lately been accustomed to.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

4 February, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

I did not write you by the last post, relying upon Count Byland's information that he had crossed in the packet from England to Cuxhaven in company with your colleagues. But I find by a letter from Mr. King of 24th ultimo that the Count must have been mistaken, for he tells me that Messrs. E[llsworth] and D[avie] reimbarked at Lisbon for L'Orient. Mr. Pitcairn tells me the same thing, and mentions 29th November[1] as the date of their reimbarkation. But if this account be accurate, there is reason for concern and alarm that we have not heard of their arrival in France.

The repetition of the proposal for negotiation on the part of France, and the shyness which England shows in the second answer, are both circumstances of considerable seeming importance. It is true that when these answers were given they did not know in England the final determination of Russia to withdraw her troops. As to the *odium* of another campaign, it seems to me that England has now taken it very formally upon her shoulders, and, therefore, the British government must be extremely confident that it will be successful. They are apt to be over sanguine; but if the interior of France be as many people suppose, the policy is good. *Rœderer*[2] to be sure says that before the 18th of

[1] December 21st they sailed from Lisbon.

[2] Pierre Louis, Comte de Rœderer (1754–1835).

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Brumaire ninety-nine out of one hundred of the whole French people wished for a *king* as well as himself. Now if this be true, though he by the place of councillor of state has been converted, that cannot be the case with the rest.

General Washington we learn from the latest accounts by the way of England died after a very short illness on the 15th of December. He is gone to a better world, very few of whose inhabitants were while sojourners in this so deserving of it. If there be in that state room for the exercise of virtue, its powers must be more extensive and less clogged than on this wretched globe. But where all are glorious he will shine with more than a common luster. The world needs some consolation for the loss of such a man.[1]

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

11 February, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

With respect to the mission itself I have a letter from my brother, dated 31st December, in which he says:

We presume our envoys to France who sailed early in November have ere this safely arrived *somewhere*. They had an absolute control over the destination of the frigate in which they embarked, and nobody knows whence we may hear from them first. Their departure was at a fortunate moment, when the tide of prosperity had materially turned against the republican armies, and when

[1] "I was very much affected with the account of General Washington's death. He is now beyond the reach of all bad passions which have attempted to shed some of their venom even upon him, and his character will remain to all ages a model of human virtue, untarnished with a single vice. The loss of such a man is a misfortune to mankind. To our country it is a heavy calamity." *To Joseph Pitcairn*, February 4, 1800. Ms.

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rumors prevailed, though destitute of foundation, that the coalition had resolved to compel an universal combination against the French republic. The story was circulated with great zeal that, previous to the sailing of the frigate *United States*, the British minister had strenuously remonstrated against the departure of the Commissioners for France. This was untrue, though there is room to believe that the mission was regarded with a jealous eye by the British cabinet. Since the affairs upon the continent have reassumed a more favorable aspect for France; the total failure, and we apprehend the disastrous issue of the expedition to Holland; our advances to meet any disposition that may discover itself on the part of the French republic towards an adjustment of difficulties, are viewed with much greater approbation than at any period since the envoys were appointed. The strains of invective in which some people had indulged against the measure have, in many instances, been converted into applause, and, except Fenno's *Gazette*, there is not to my knowledge a newspaper in the country that does not speak of it in the style of encomium which I thought it deserved.

I have given you this long extract because it so fully confirms what we had both anticipated as to the effects upon the public mind in our country of the events at the close of the last campaign. The new revolution in France was not known at Philadelphia at the date of my brother's letter, and must necessarily have contributed further to the same effect. The course of events has indeed been a most eloquent apologist for this measure, and I believe will continue so. The British government by the repeated refusal to treat with France have shown themselves very sanguine indeed to their future success; but when their last answer was given, they knew nothing of the Vendée pacification, nor of the final recall of the Russian troops. A campaign of various and alternate success seems since these events highly probable, and I believe is the best thing that can happen.

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The report of General Washington's death was but too true. Nothing of him now remains but his immortal spirit, and [one] of the greatest names that ever appeared upon earth for the pride and consolation of the human race. I feel it as an inestimable happiness to have been the cotemporary and countryman of that man. "Praise enough for a common mind" says Cowper,

> That Chatham's language was his mother tongue,
> And Wolfe's great name compatriot with his own.

The sentiment is good; but how much more forcibly can we apply it to the name of Washington than it appears in the names chosen by the poet himself to express his idea.[1] . . .

Yours faithfully,

[1] "On the 21 we communicated the death of the illustrious W[ashington] in the great hall of the Society of F. M. which was hung in deep mourning on the occasion, and upon the orchestra was placed an obelisk representing the bust of W. on his tomb; on one side the emblem of the society crowning it with laurels, on the other the genius of Humanity weeping for his loss. On the front of the figure was inscribed the following words: 'The Society honors the merits of that man whose death Humanity mourns.'

The ceremony was composed of a funeral hymn, set to plaintive music, and executed by a numerous band of musicians in a manner which impressed every heart of a very crowded audience; and an elegant elegy pronounced by Mr. I. Kinker, a celebrated lawyer of this city, and delivered with an animation due to the interesting occasion. All the Americans here assisted at the ceremony, and esteeming it to be my duty to take public notice of such an honorable mark of attention to our country, I addressed the Society in behalf of my fellow citizens in the words of which the enclosed is the copy." *Sylvanus Bourne to John Quincy Adams*, Amsterdam, March 25, 1800. Ms.

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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 161 [TIMOTHY PICKERING]

BERLIN, 8 March, 1800.

SIR:

Since my last letter I have received duplicates of your favors N. 18 and 19, the latter dated October 4th. I have nothing from your department more recent than the 14th of the same month.

You may perhaps have heard ere this that Messrs. Ellsworth and Davie, after reëmbarking at Lisbon, and being a month at sea, were obliged to put in again at Corunna from which place they concluded to proceed by land to Paris. Mr. Murray left the Hague on the 17th of last month, and probably all three Commissioners will in the course of a few days reach the place of their destination.[1] The prospect that their mission will have a successful issue appears to be more flattering from day to day. The formal and public tribute of respect, which the first consul Buonaparte has paid to the memory of our great and ever lamented fellow citizen, Washington, is honorable to himself and I presume will give much pleasure to our country. He has ordered black crapes to be suspended to the flags and colors of the French armies throughout the whole Republic for ten days, and that the bust of Washington shall be placed in the Tuileries, with those of many other illustrious military characters of ancient and modern times. And a funeral eulogium, at his desire, was delivered at the Hotel des Invalides, in honor of our great patriot and statesman. Upon this occasion the French minister at this court, General Beurnonville, with his whole legation, paid me a visit a few days since to

[1] Ellsworth and Davie reached Paris on March 4, and found Murray there. Joseph Bonaparte, Fleurieu, and Rœderer were the French commissioners.

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testify their sorrow at the loss which the United States have experienced by the death of their most illustrious citizen.[1]

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 25 May, 1800.

The latest accounts I have had the pleasure of receiving from you are of January 5 and February 8. But Mr. Paleske has arrived at London on his way hither, and I expect to see him in a few days. He informs me that he has letters from you for me.[2]

[1] "Le Général Beurnonville, ses deux aides de camp et les deux secrétaires de la Légation Française se sont présentés chez Monsieur Adams, Ministre des Etats-Unis près sa Majesté le Roi de Prusse, pour avoir l'honneur de lui faire leurs complimens de condoléance sur la perte que sa République vient de faire par la mort de l'illustre Washington, et lui témoigner toute la part qu'ils y prennent.

"Berlin 5 Ventôse an 8 de la République Française (24 Fevrier, 1800)."

"Le General Beurnonville, envoy extraordinaire de la République Française près sa majesté le Roi de Prusse, a l'honneur de présenter le bonjour à Monsieur Adams, ministre plénipotentiaire des Etats-Unis d'Amérique, et de lui adresser un exemplaire de l'éloge funèbre de Washington; il désire qu'il y trouve l'expression des sentimens de sa nation pour ce grand homme pour sa nation même: le général assure Monsieur Adams personellement de sa haute consideration.

"Berlin le 6 Ventô e an 8 Rep'ue. 26 Fevrier 1800." Ms. Compare Rufus King's account of the conduct of the English court, in *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, III. 202.

[2] "He [Paleske, the Prussian Consul] carries with him the ratification of the treaty between the United States and Prussia, which received the sanction of twenty out of twenty-six members of the Senate. Whilst the treaty was under consideration, an anti-member proposed a resolution that the President should be requested to lay before them the instructions and correspondence between Mr. A[dams] and the Secretary of State. This was done, no doubt, with a view to find something to cavil at, and to serve as an electioneering project. No movement of that party now, which does not keep that in view. P[inckne]y of C[arolin]a said he was desirous of seeing the correspondence, because he had heard that Mr. A[dams], in some of his letters, had censured, or did not approve of, the measures

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A longer time has elapsed since I wrote you last than I can apologize for with propriety. It is possible that at some future day I may send you the result of an occupation which, almost in spite of myself, I have suffered to engross for several months past, not only every moment of my leisure, but even much time which ought to have been devoted to other pursuits. For the present I can only tell you, that it is the translation of a popular German poem, which is so far completed that I promise you it shall not henceforth interrupt the frequency of my correspondence with you.[1] The stagnation of political events during the winter months, together with various other motives, induced me at first to undertake the work as an amusement for myself and a few friends; but what I had taken as a pleasant companion soon mastered me so completely, that for months together I could scarcely snatch from it here and there an hour for any other purpose whatsoever. What is worst of all is that, now I may consider the thing as in a manner finished, I am so ashamed of it in every sense that I hesitate even at promising you a sight of it, and should not now mention it to you, but that the long interval since I wrote you required some excuse on my part, and in this case, as in all others where excuses are necessary, I know of none better than the statement of the naked truth.

I am sorry that the President should have expected from me a narrative of the revolution in France, which brought

of government. How that, had it been true, could have anything to do with this treaty, I leave the mover to find out. The resolution came; the President was very wroth; but ordered the papers sent. The result was, to the great mortification of the party, and a declaration from some members who opposed the treaty that it was ably conducted, and it passed without a word more of opposition." *Abigail Adams to John Quincy Adams*, February 28, 1800. Ms.

[1] Wieland's "Oberon." The Ms. translation is in the Adams Mss. After making it he found an English translation, made and published by William Sotheby.

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forward another constitution, and placed Buonaparte at the head of affairs in that country, with powers superior to those of any limited monarch in Europe. That hideous monster of democracy, begotten by madness upon corruption, which produced such infinite mischief in Europe, is now so thoroughly exploded from the country where it originated, that I could not imagine it necessary to send any comment upon the transactions at Paris upon the commencement of the last winter. The character and tendency of the present French constitution is so very obvious, that I scarcely thought it susceptible of elucidation. But it has afforded me some amusement upon perusing Dr. Priestley's letters to the inhabitants of Northumberland,[1] to see him cry up the French *directorial* constitution as superior to that of the United States, for the very articles which the French have been the first to abolish. Poor Doctor! whatever his gifts are he has not the happiness of being gifted with the second sight. He shared the misfortune of all those, who for the last ten years have in America ventured in their panegyrics upon French affairs to descend into particulars. I have scarcely known an instance of the kind, of a person applauded, but he was banished or guillotined; of a thing admired, but it was overthrown as detestable at the very moment when the encomiastic pen was in motion.

But Dr. Priestley loves the French revolution, and so large is the swallow, so ostrich-like the digestion of every man of that description, that I have no doubt he will be as ready to admire its present result, as he was any of the former; unless his self love should take offence at their having so contemptuously thrown away what he pronounced to be the supreme excellence of their constitution. The Doctor *fears* that pure patriotism exists only in Utopia, which may be

[1] *Letters to the Inhabitants of Northumberland and its Neighborhood*, 1799.

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admitted as a justly candid confession though, as a sarcasm upon human nature, I believe, it is not true. The Doctor looks through a concave glass at mankind, and affirms upon his honor that it is the nature of man to walk upon his head.

He is remarkably tender in his letters of the feelings and characters of the late French government, that is, of the five worthy Directors, who have since been with so little ceremony kicked out of office by the French themselves, as utterly unfit for the places they had held. He disapproves the President's incessant, unnecessary, *not to say* unjust, invectives against those worthy friends of Liberty. And I have heard the present French minister at this court, General Beurnonville, utter invectives against those same persons, in comparison with which all that the President ever said of them was panegyric.

The Doctor tells us about his *speculative* turn, and that he speculates upon everything. But if he had limited the subjects of his speculations, he might have been more successful in them. If he had reasoned much less through his life, he would have reasoned better. He recommends to the United States with respect to foreign nations the policy of China. China, says he, though a commercial country, carries on no commerce itself; has no resident Ambassadors in any country; *and what country has flourished more than China?*

Suppose a political writer in America should advise the United States to adopt an absolute and unlimited monarchy, and should add, such is and has been from time immemorial the government of China; *and what country has flourished more?*

Absurd as the argument would appear to Doctor Priestley, it is his own. The flourishing state of China is no more to be attributed to its commercial or diplomatic system than to

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its despotism. But an undoubted effect of the Chinese system is, that they are in respect of literature, the arts and sciences, many centuries in the rear of Europe, and that, to this day, they are ignorant of the circulation of the blood.

His encomium upon Stone's intercepted letter to himself affords another specimen, if it be sincere, of his acuteness in reasoning. He, as well as Mr. Stone, wishes for a total revolution of the government in England, but that it may be effected peaceably, and without the interference of any foreign power. Which is just as if he should say to his neighbor, I wish I could see a man run a sword through your heart, though being very tender souled, I hope it would not hurt you.

I am sick of such reasoners as Dr. Priestley, and the French nation are heartily sick of them too. Instead of his five Directors removable by fragments annually, they have got a first Consul for ten years, with powers as much greater than those of an American President, as the command of a lieutenant-general exceeds the command of a lieutenant. Instead of jealous exclusions from office of every man who has learnt by experience to fill an office, they have made re-elections possible in all cases. Instead of elections for short periods, they have extended them to long ones, and the most important body of men in their constitution, their Senate, the electors both of their legislative, their executive, and their tribunate, are for life and self elected. How far all this may be an advancement towards the millenium which Dr. Priestley expects to flow from the French revolution, I pretend not to say; but it departs as much from all his favorite principles at least as much as it approaches to that happy consummation.

. . . . . .

Yours &c.

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 12 June, 1800.

Mr. Paleske arrived here a few days after I wrote you last, and delivered me your letter and pamphlets, together with the dispatches from the Secretary of State, and the letters to my wife, which were extremely acceptable to her, as she had been so long without hearing from her parents.

I was much gratified by your anecdotes respecting the proceedings in the Senate upon the treaty. The opposition gentlemen must indeed be at a loss for the materials of censure upon the government, when they are willing to make use of such disapprobation as I ever expressed or felt concerning any part of its administration.

The orations in honor of that honorable man, who only lived in memory as a model for later statesmen and heroes, gave me likewise great pleasure, though not all worthy of the illustrious character they commemorate. Poor as our country unfortunately is in the most elegant departments of literature, I cannot but hope that some native unsophisticated American will be found to give the world a specimen of biography, which may be in its way as useful and as honorable as the life it will record. A subject in every respect so admirable ought to be treated by the wisest head and the most excellent heart in the union.

Webster's letters to Dr. Priestley [1] are sensible and temperate — perhaps too temperate, a virtue which is apt to degenerate into frigidity. He has treated with less severity than it deserved the insidious and *hypocritical* attempt of the Doctor to attack our government and constitution upon the pretence of defending himself. The Doctor seems

[1] *Ten letters to J. Priestley in Answer to his Letters to the Inhabitants of Northumberland.* By Noah Webster, 1800.

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to have felt peculiar sensibility at Porcupine's calling him an hypocrite, for the sting of satire is never so sharp as when pointed by truth. Now if there were no other instance to give than one I mentioned in my last, the Doctor's assertion that he wishes for a total revolution of government in England, but that it may be effected peaceably, this alone would suffice to stamp him for an hypocrite; that is, a man who pretends to virtues which he does not possess. Shallow as Dr. Priestley's political opinions are, he is not fool enough to believe this possible, or to wish sincerely what he knows to be impossible. The real wish therefore is for revolution, and the added proviso, that it may be peaceably effected, is a mere pretence to sentiments of humanity, which he did not feel, and therefore pure genuine hypocrisy.

It is not at all surprising that the American Jacobins should be dissatisfied with the late changes in France, and the new constitution there, which has so formally abjured all their favorite tenets. The French Jacobins are as little pleased with it, but as long as the first Consul shall be a victorious general they dare not stir. The state of France has been very much ameliorated in every respect by its change. Internally a dangerous rebellion has been suppressed, and external victory has returned in every quarter to their banners. A power greater than that of any limited monarch in Europe has, indeed, been committed to the first Consul; but his character improves by success; he has done very few improper things since he attained his present station and many wise things. His fate now depends again upon the chance of war, and as every present prospect promises him a career of victory calculated to increase still higher his military reputation, it is probable that his power may acquire a consistency that could not be expected when he ventured upon the bold attempt which seated him at the

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head of the French nation. It is indeed yet impossible to consider him as a principled man. His ambition, like that of other conquerors, scruples little what means it uses; but it has certainly great and noble views, and the prospects of France in case of his failure are in every particular so much worse, than what she may hope from seeing him established firmly, that I believe this is really to be wished.

There is nothing in which the French policy has been so much improved and amended under the present administration as in their treatment of other nations, and especially of the neutral states. All their plundering and barbarous decrees against neutral navigation have been rescinded, and they have established as a court of final appeal in admiralty causes, a tribunal which they call the *Council of Prizes*. They have commenced their sessions, and their first decision was an act of signal justice to citizens of the United States. The ship *Pigeon* of Philadelphia had been taken by two national frigates, and condemned by the two inferior courts of admiralty — in the second instance both vessel and cargo — for the want of a *role d'équipage*. But as it appeared the want of this paper was owing to the yellow fever's being at Philadelphia when the vessel sailed, the Council of Prizes have reversed the sentences of the lower courts, decreed the restoration of the ship and cargo, and costs and damages to the appellants. Such at least is the account I find in the last Paris papers, though I have not [heard] from either of our Commissioners. If the fact be so, as I believe it is, and the Council of Prizes proceed to act with the same equity and regard for the laws of nations in other cases, the negotiations of our Commissioners will be greatly facilitated, and the issue will show how really prudent and politic the appointment of this mission to France was. Yet this incident serves to show how little

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we can calculate upon the effects of public measures upon the public mind. From most of our accounts it should seem that this very measure has weakened the influence of the person at the head of the American government; that it alienated many of the friends to the government, without gaining any of its enemies. The next election will doubtless show how far these surmises are well grounded. But neither our age nor country has been the first to discover that

> An habitation giddy and unsure,
> Hath he that buildeth on the vulgar heart.
>
> . . . . . .

Ever affectionately yours.

TO FRIEDRICH GENTZ

BERLIN, June 16, 1800.

SIR:

I had already perused with great pleasure the comparison between the origin and principles of the French and American revolutions contained in the *Historic Journal* for the two last months, before receiving the copies which you had the goodness to send me yesterday. It cannot but afford a gratification to every American attached to the honor of his country to see its revolution so ably vindicated from the imputation of having originated, or been conducted upon the same principles as that of France, and I feel myself as an American citizen highly obliged to you for the consideration you have bestowed upon the subject, as well as for the honorable manner in which you have borne testimony to the purity of principle upon which the revolution of my country was founded. I beg you, sir, to accept my best thanks for your very acceptable present and to be assured that I shall take much satisfaction in transmitting and making

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known the treatise to persons in the United States capable of estimating its merits.[1]

TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

11 July, 1800.

. . . . . .

I see the electioneering campaign has begun at a very early period indeed, and with equal inveteracy and ability on the part of the opposition. That very pimping to the popular passions upon which all the Jacobin cabals are founded is but too well calculated to succeed in a country like ours. I despise it from the bottom of my soul, but I have too long witnessed its efficiency not to be conscious of it. When I see Governor M'Kean and Edward Livingston become the panegyrists of Washington, I cannot help thinking of Boileau's lines:

> Je crois voir le diable
> Que Dieu force à louer les Saints.

You tell me in one of your former letters that it is surprising to see how pliable the tempers of people are, and how generally they follow the torrent of political success. But such is the nature of the human heart. When Governor M'Kean turns out of office old meritorious sufferers in the cause of our revolution, to make way for his own sons and creatures, his party care not a fig about inconsistency of such conduct with his professions of republican purity, or rather they feel there is no inconsistency in it. The object in both instances is

[1] In pursuance of this assurance Adams made a translation of Gentz's essay, *Origin and Principles of the American Revolution, compared with the French Revolution*, which was published in Philadelphia, in 1800. He also prepared a review of a later work by the same author, *On the Origin and Character of the War against the French Revolution*, which was printed in *The Portfolio*, August 22, September 19 and 26, 1801.

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the same. The professions are made to strengthen his party. The offices are taken from his opponents and given to his friends to strengthen his party. The professions are like Hodge's razors, made not for use but for sale, and when they have answered their purpose it is ridiculous to think of returning them upon the seller's hands. He has got his money, and may boldly laugh at the dupes who took his razors upon the presumption that they would shave.

The fair mask of public spirit has so often and so long been worn to cover the foul visage of private interests and malignant passions that if it were susceptible of decay, it would long since have been worn out. But as it has always been used successfully, so it will continue to succeed as long as there shall be on earth men to cheat and be cheated. Nor is it of much consequence how thin the disguise is, since a Cooper [1] can assume it with as bold a face as a M'Kean.

To a man of the philosophical school of Timon a pamphlet like that of Cooper's trial must be a valuable feast. Here is an expatriated English patriot, who turns to a flaming American patriot; who begs for an office to which he could have not the least pretension, of a man whose political opponent he owns he had been, as holding him unfit for his station from want of capacity; who, upon meeting the refusal which in every respect he deserved, lays up his resentments carefully for two years, until the time approaches when a new election is to designate the dispenser of offices, and then seizes the only moment when he thinks he can do harm to libel a man of whom he had begged in vain for office. And now talks of his sacrifice for the public with as bold a face as if he were a real Decius. Boasts of his *manliness*, because the tone in which he begged for office was surly and not servile, the growling of a mastiff and not the fawn-

[1] Thomas Cooper.

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ing of a spaniel for the sop; and of his purity from vindictive motives, because he waited two years to exhale his venom, knowing that the object against which he meant to dart it would then be most within his reach. Holds out his application to the President of the United States for an office, and his friend Priestley's application for him, as confidential communications from friend to friend, which the President could not honorably divulge, and publishes extracts of real private letters written by the President before he held that office, and entirely as from and to a private person. What a comment all these transactions contain too upon Priestleian republicanism and virtue. Mr. Adams had written letters to Dr. Priestley, containing assurances of respect and esteem for his personal character. Upon these, no sooner is Mr. Adams become President of the United States, than Dr. Priestley grounds an application for official appointment to a man notoriously improper for it, and upon being refused commences libeller of the same man, whose private friendship he abused by improper solicitation.[1]

With respect to the changes you mention of the heads of departments I lament them, whatever the occasion which gave rise to them may have been; and as I am entirely left to conjecture, with very few data upon which to ground an opinion concerning them, I cannot but wish you had been less reserved in speaking of them.[2] It has been suggested that the last mission to France was sent against the opinion of the two Secretaries who are no longer in place. It can no longer be a question whether this measure was for the benefit of the United States. The ministerial writers in

[1] *Works of John Adams*, IX. 13.

[2] McHenry, Secretary of War, resigned May 6, and Pickering, Secretary of State, was dismissed from office May 12. On the same day (May 12) Marshall was named Secretary of State.

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England, to be sure, found great fault with it, and talked about the degradation of dignity in negotiating before the injuries and insults of the French government had been repaired and atoned for. Such too was in a transient moment of success the system pursued by the same English ministry, which had twice sent Lord Malmesbury to implore peace in vain. They soon after rejected repeated offers of peace with the same arrogance. Now what are the consequences of this dignified conduct? Why, those same English ministers, after spending fifty millions sterling more, will in a moment of defeat and humiliation be compelled again to entreat for peace, and take the terms prescribed by an insulted and exulting enemy, instead of those which they might have had by fair agreement and without humiliation on either side. Should the consequences of the mission to France be ever so unpropitious to the personal influence of the person at the head of the American government, I bless my God that he had the firmness and the wisdom to propose and to persist in that measure, even against the opinion of his friends and supporters. At least I consider our country now as out of the danger of a formal war with France. And surely in point of dignity it was infinitely more generous to send a mission to France at a time when she appeared in adversity, than it would have been to wait for the moment of her triumph.

Such at present is her situation in a very eminent degree. You will undoubtedly before this reaches you hear of the battle of Marengo, the most decisive engagement, perhaps, that has been fought within a century. The Corsican ruffian is beyond all doubt a hero in the common acceptation of the word, and I suppose in other respects as good a man as the rest of his class. If you look into the twenty-first book of Livy at the fourth chapter, you will find the character of an

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ancient hero, and one of the greatest that ever lived. Buonaparte's military excellence is in all probability equal to his, and the remainder of his character is perhaps not so bad.[1]

. . . . . .

Yours invariably.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

DRESDEN, 15 September, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

You will not be surprised, after having learned by my letters from this place last year what attractions it possesses for the lover of something more than landscapes, to find by the date of this that I have renewed my visit here. But I am obliged this time to content myself with a very transient view of those masterpieces of art which had then so much of my admiration that it could not be staggered even by the heaviest batteries of your eloquence. I am here only

[1] On July 17, 1800, Adams started on an excursion to Silesia, mainly for the benefit of Mrs. Adams, whose health had never been good at Berlin. He wrote an account of this journey of more than three months in a series of letters to his brother, Thomas Boylston Adams, who had just returned to the United States. In January, 1801, Joseph Dennie started a literary periodical at Philadelphia, *The Portfolio*, and knowing of these Silesian letters he obtained permission from the receiver to print. The first letter, dated July 21, 1800, appeared in the first issue of *The Portfolio*, January 3, 1801, and the series of forty-two letters ran in the journal to November 7, 1801. In 1804 an individual, without the knowledge or consent of the author, republished the letters in London, and from this copy they were translated into German, and published at Breslau, with notes, by Friederich Albert Zimmerman. Three years later a French translation by J. Dupuy, was printed in Paris. As the letters had been written in full and free confidence, without any intention to publish, and had not been edited for publication, a few statements might have caused embarrassment had the persons affected complained or taken notice of them. So far as is known no such result followed, and the volume is still interesting as an early account of Silesia. See the note by Charles Francis Adams in the *Memoirs*, I. 240. It has not been thought necessary to include any of those letters in these volumes.

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for a few days and that accidentally, upon my return from a tour of two months through Silesia and the country of Glatz. A period during which I have lived in a blissful ignorance of politics and news, which I can only sigh to think must so soon terminate. The interruptions of this felicity have been few and seldom. But when they have come, it was to grate like scrannel pipes of wretched straw amidst a concert of such harmony as might create a soul under the ribs of death.

There is not, I believe, in all Europe a province so little visited by foreign travellers as Silesia; yet there are very few, if any, which contain such a multiplicity of objects calculated to afford both amusement and instruction; certainly none where a soul susceptible of enjoyment from the contemplation of the beauties of nature, or a mind curious to investigate the world of human industry, can find greater and more varied satisfaction. It is likewise as a manufacturing province the only part of the Prussian dominions, the commerce of which is important to the United States, and might furnish us with linens and broadcloths upon more advantageous terms than we receive them from England and Ireland.

Since my arrival here I have been delighted to receive after a long interval another letter from you, and thank you for the copy of your letter to Dexter and for the paper. I had seen in an extract from a London paper the statement respecting the negotiation at Paris, which it seems was very little worse, if so bad as the reality.

As to France's project of an armed neutrality in the North, and her *persuading* the maritime powers to establish the principle of making the ship clear the goods, I could not read those paragraphs of the statement without laughing. The northern maritime powers have wit enough to know that

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their great danger is from France, not from England; and they likewise know that for the establishment of maritime principles France is as impotent as she is preponderant upon firm ground. Russia might indeed go far towards forcing England into an acquiescence of such a principle; but I believe the French politicians just now overrate *their* influence upon Russia. The late affair of the Danish convoy has incontestably proved that as yet there is no concert of the northern powers against England, and that any attempt of a single third rate power to resist by force the system of the admiralty must end in defeat and mortification.[1] It is not while France has her jaws open to swallow the whole European continent that she can persuade others to set up a different maritime code.

Upon the subject of your letter to Mr. Dexter, and the divisions of which it speaks, I have had more than one uncomfortable hour, but I know scarcely anything more than the facts which are public. My friends in writing to me upon the subject observe a degree of circumspection which they may think necessary, but which keeps me very much in the dark. Of the *Essex junto* I heard formerly relative to state affairs, and as Colonel P[ickering] was an Essex man, it is possible his conduct and opinions may have been influenced by those persons who were said to compose it. They are men of the first abilities we have, and some of them may perhaps incline rather too much towards English politics. It is highly probable they may have disapproved the last mission to France, and as to that systematic spirit of subordination which you think necessary, it is entirely out of the question with them. For this reason although their influence has always been great in Massachusetts they have always been considered as bad party men, and they are

[1] *Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, III. 282, 287.

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generally unpopular men. I do not believe that the late Secretary of State withheld intentionally any papers of importance from the President; but he was unquestionably averse to the last mission to France, and has never been reconciled to it. From various circumstances I think it probable even that his opposition against it was not merely speculative, and he may perhaps have delayed the departure of your colleagues. But I suppose you know from themselves, what I certainly do not, the cause of the frigate's putting in to Lisbon. I do not deem it of any consequence. Had the negotiation commenced nine months sooner than it did, the result in my opinion would have been the same. . . .

Yours truly.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 30 October, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

You have every reason to believe that some of your late letters did not reach me in due season, as at this moment I am to acknowledge at once the receipt of three dated September 27, and October 5 and 10. The first of which especially, as the messenger of the happiest tidings I had heard for years, the successful issue of your negotiation with France, ought not to have remained an hour without an answer to give you that hearty congratulation, which the warmth and strength of my feelings upon that occasion so urgently dictated. My only apology is that I was prevented from writing by illness. . . .

I readily believe that my summer has been spent in a more *agreeable* manner than yours; but as an ample compensation you have the pleasure of reflecting that you have in the same space of time rendered an important service to your

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country. While my time has been given to sloth and enjoyment, yours has been employed in toil and usefulness. I should take great shame to myself from the comparison, were I not fully conscious that I could not have spent those months in a more beneficial manner to anyone; and as my post itself was a place of almost total inactivity, the best use I could make of the summer was to obtain a particular and intimate acquaintance with the most important and valuable province of the Prussian dominions. This purpose I partly effected, though from being obliged to hasten back some weeks earlier and more rapidly than I intended, I could not accomplish it to the extent I desired. Your advice with respect to the publication of my tour has, as all advice from you must have, great weight in my mind. Numerous as the accounts of travels have been of late years, there has been no work either in English or French comprehending a tour into Silesia, and the subject would have, therefore, in some sort the advantage of novelty. Yet if handled by a writer properly qualified for it, a richer subject could not be desired; but it is from this very point that my greatest objections to your friendly design arise. I shall not dilate upon this idea, which is far from being pleasant to myself, and which may have an air of affectation to you. But when I tell you that in my opinion a traveller who presumes to give the result of his observations *to the public*, ought to be versed in every art and every science, as much as Cicero requires of an orator, I may without scruple add that this judgment, of course, is a sentence of silence upon myself. As, however, such information as I could collect concerning a very interesting province, the very name of which was scarcely known in our country, appeared to me worthy of being communicated, I wrote a series of letters to my brother, which, without aspiring to the pretensions of a printed type,

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will give to my most particular friends in America some knowledge at least of a country which by no means deserves the neglect it has experienced.

To return to a subject of greater importance, I repeat my felicitations upon the happy issue of your embassy to Paris. As this mission was the origin of that very strange division of the federal party, which will probably transfer the office of President at the impending election into the hands of their opponents, I confess I have felt more than ordinary solicitude that it might terminate successfully. It is so essential to the nature of mankind to judge of things merely from events, that I could not have seen without some degree of mortification the defection of so many persons of abilities and influence from their party and their chief, apparently justified by the results of events. As things have terminated it seems to me that no man of common sense will henceforth dispute the wisdom of a measure which proved so injurious to the personal influence of the man at the head of our government. Under this conviction I feel myself now perfectly at ease with regard to the issue of the election. The President may now go out of office with at least as much honor and dignity as he could desire from being continued in office, and if the same measure which has given an honorable peace to his country should deprive him of his reelection, it will but prove the more victoriously that he acted in his station, not as the man of a party, but as the man of the whole nation.

By this event too it appears to me that the question concerning the presidency loses much of its importance as it respects the interests of the country. In our external affairs, being at peace with all the world, I cannot believe that any party, possessing the reins of government among us, would wantonly involve us in any further dangerous quarrels. It

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will indeed require great prudence and coolness to keep henceforth upon tolerable terms with England, who is evidently dissatisfied with the reconciliation between us and France, and who will be captious, troublesome, and provoking. But she has such a weight of odium bearing upon her from all the northern powers of Europe, that I question whether she will venture upon extremities with us while she remains at war, and there is no present probability of her obtaining peace.

Besides the motives which induce me to rejoice at your success from patriotic and from personal, or rather family, considerations, my friendship has derived a warm and hearty gratification from the circumstance that the negotiation was at first commenced solely and in so great a degree conducted to its end by you. What the diplomatic corps may think of your returning to the rank and character of Minister Resident at the Hague, after having been Envoy Extraordinary, is of little consequence. In the eyes of a reasonable man it will give you a new title to respect. But if after what you have done, your country and its government should leave you still in the character of Minister Resident, it would be a degradation in them which they would not easily answer for. I have too much confidence in their justice and sense of propriety to believe they will. . . .

Yours.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 171 [JOHN MARSHALL]

BERLIN, 11 November, 1800.

SIR:

I have now the honor to inclose copies of the declaration delivered by the Russian ministry to the envoys of Sweden, Denmark and Prussia, proposing the revival of the armed

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neutrality, and of the answer given by the Swedish government to the complaint of Spain, on account of the seizure of a Swedish vessel in the harbor of Barcelona, by certain English naval officers who, by that means, effected the capture of two Spanish armed vessels lying there.

The answer of Count Haugwitz to the Russian declaration is dated October 11th, and purports the King's full concurrence with the Emperor of Russia in the declaration, and his hearty disposition to join in adopting measures for the security of navigation; but intimates that perhaps the system of the armed neutrality will require at present some modification, and expresses a desire to know what measures are contemplated for the purpose of enforcing the new system in case it should be necessary. It likewise referred to the convention between Great Britain and Denmark of August 29th, and suspecting that it was not known at St. Petersburg at the time when the declaration was made, represented the necessity of waiting to see if it had not produced any change in the intentions of the Emperor on this subject.

Baron Krudener in his reply, dated October 13th, urged an immediate entrance upon the negotiation, giving his assurance that he had received dispatches from his court since the convention of August, (saying) that it was known there, and that in this respect it had produced no alteration whatsoever in the Emperor's intentions.

Count Haugwitz's second answer declared, that he has the king's orders to enter into conference with Baron Krudener relative to this affair, and is ready to receive whatever propositions the Emperor may direct to be made. It is dated October 17th.

The plan proposed by the Russian cabinet has within these very few days arrived here, but I have not yet seen it.

I am &c.

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TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 172 [JOHN MARSHALL]

BERLIN, 15 November, 1800.

SIR:

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Whether the disposition and wishes of the present French government are so absolutely and unequivocally pacific as their professions indicate, may admit of a doubt, but a circumstance that entirely distinguishes the first Consul's policy from that of all his recent predecessors at the head of the French administration, is a desire not to be at war with all the world at once, and of improving every opportunity to obtain peace with such enemies as France is least able to injure, and whose friendship is beyond all question the more valuable to her than the issue of any possible hostilities on her part against them could be. Hence the late convention with the United States; hence the pacific arrangements concluded with the Barbary powers; and hence the address which has been used to effect a peace with Russia, to whom France has made every possible advance, insomuch as to offer a restitution without equivalent of all the prisoners taken in the campaign of 1799, and of all the Russian standards which fell into the hands of the French. This has introduced a negotiation in which France has requested to know what further Russia required for peace; to which the answer was, that the Elector of Bavaria should be restored to his dominions, that Piedmont should be restored to the King of Sardinia, and that the King of Naples and the Duke of Würtemberg should be left unmolested. These conditions indeed require sacrifices of more consequence than a few thousand prisoners, whose detention is useless expense, or of standards, the mere memorials of victories of small

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account, amidst the numbers obtained by the first Consul himself. It is questionable whether he will think it expedient to comply with all or any of these demands. The negotiation is at least commenced, and every day the prospect of approaching peace with the great northern potentate becomes more apparent.

. . . . . .

I am &c.

TO RUFUS KING

BERLIN, 22 November, 1800.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I learn with great pleasure that the British government have given you an official assurance that they see no cause of complaint or dissatisfaction on our Convention lately concluded with France; the more so because it has been industriously circulated upon the continent that they were very much displeased with it, and even inclined to a rupture with us for it. This opinion has been countenanced by the manner in which some of the English newspapers have spoken of that negotiation and its issue, and has derived further credit from the recall of Mr. Liston,[1] on account of the disagreeable situation, say the Gazettes, in which he has long found himself at Philadelphia.

I know not whether the cabinet of London are aware of the thousand stories of this kind, which are now constantly spread abroad in the north of Europe, and have at least the tacit encouragement of these governments themselves, which have all strong resentments against England chiefly on account of her principles of maritime laws and the unchecked

[1] Sir Robert Liston (1742–1836), who was minister to the United States from 1796–1804.

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and unpunished practices of her navy. The universality and bitterness of odium against the English name throughout all this part of Europe are incredible. Much of it is undoubtedly derived from the intrigues of her enemies, and much from the lurking spirit of jacobinism. But far the greater part is owing to Britain herself, to the domineering principles avowed in her admiralty courts and the insulting excesses of her naval officers. All the transactions relative to the capture of the Danish convoy; the proceedings in the affair of the Swedish vessel seized at Barcelona and used to take the two Spanish ships; a similar circumstance which took place nearly about the same time at Embden, have contributed to exasperate the nations and the governments of the north. The Emperor of Russia, who has now, in addition to his ill humor and his passions, a strong interest of his own to bear hard upon England in order to compel the delivery of Malta into his possession, spurs and instigates all the other northern powers to violent measures against her, and if his impetuosity should not break out into immediate war, he will at least use all his influence for the revival of the armed neutrality. Even the temper of this country has grown angry and testy towards England, as a very recent occurrence has proved. A Prussian vessel was lately taken at the mouth of the Texel by a British ship-of-war and sent for adjudication; but from stress of weather, before it could reach an English port, was obliged to put into Cuxhaven. The master of the Prussian vessel came on shore and claimed the protection of his minister at Hamburg. *He* immediately demanded of the Senate that the vessel be delivered up, on the ground that the entrance of a prize into a port within the line of demarcation was a violation of the neutrality, of which the King of Prussia is the head and protector. The Senate demurred; said the vessel being an

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English prize, they had no control over her, nor even the means to compel her delivery. Upon which the King of Prussia, as *protector of the neutrality*, ordered a detachment of troops to go and take possession of Cuxhaven. In the meantime the English prize master by the order of his superior officer delivered up the vessel. Lord Carysfort presented here a very temperate and soundly argued note against the occupation of Cuxhaven by Prussian troops, and the orders to that effect have been countermanded; here this affair perhaps may end, but the course of it has shown the *temper* of Prussia in a light, as I think, not to be mistaken. . . .

Yours faithfully.

TO JOHN ADAMS

BERLIN, 25 November, 1800.

MY DEAR SIR:

Many months have passed since I received a line from you, or from my dear mother. From my brother Thomas I have no letter of a later date than July, and from the Department of State I have but one dated since last February. Perhaps I am to impute the greater part of this seeming oblivion of my American correspondents to my own remissness during the last winter. For six months, however, I have scarcely suffered a week to pass without writing, and unless my letters should have been unfortunate beyond the common proportion of failures, many of them must before this have reached the United States. I have not written, indeed, directly to you since July, but I suppose most of my letters to my brother, written upon my tour into Silesia, have been perused by you, and have given you frequent information of our situation.

I have, therefore, been obliged to depend upon the ac-

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counts from America contained in the public newspapers and the private intelligence of some Americans in Europe. All these concur in representing the state of parties and the temper of the public mind in such a state, as to leave scarce a doubt but that a change will take place at the ensuing election, which will leave you at your own disposal, and furnish one more example to the world, how the most important services to the public and a long laborious life, anxiously and *successfully* devoted to their welfare, are rewarded in popular governments.

As I know that from the earliest period of your political life you have always made up your account to meet sooner or later such treatment in return for every sacrifice and every toil, I hope and confidently believe that you will be prepared to bear this event with calmness and composure, if not with indifference; that you will not suffer it to prey upon your mind, or affect your health; nor even to think more hardly of your country than she deserves. Her truest friends I am persuaded will more keenly feel your removal from the head of her administration than yourself. Your long settled and favorite pursuits of literature and of farming will give you full employment, and prevent that craving void of the mind which is so apt to afflict statesmen out of place; which conjures up a spectre to haunt them, or embitters them against their own species in a degree that renders their own lives miserable.

In your retirement you will have not only the consolation of a consciousness that you have discharged all the duties of a virtuous citizen, but the genuine pleasure of reflecting, that by the wisdom and firmness of your administration you left that very country in safe and honorable peace, which at the period of your entrance into office was involved in dangerous and complicated disputes with more than one formi-

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dable foreign power. That without the smallest sacrifice of national honor and dignity you have succeeded in settling a quarrel with France which, under any other system of conduct than that which you pursued, would at this moment have burst into a most ruinous and fatal war, or could only be pacified by disgraceful and burthensome humiliations. The merit of this system, too, is so entirely and exclusively your own, that we are told it was disapproved by almost all the principal leaders of the party friendly to the constitution and the union, the great supporters of your last election. Nay, the general opinion is, that to this defection of your friends, originating solely in your adherence to the system you had adopted against their opinions, must be ascribed your removal from the chair at this time. Indeed, my dear sir, if this be the case, it is not your fame or honor that will suffer by the result. The common and vulgar herd of statesmen and warriors are so wont to promote on every occasion their private and personal interest at the expense of their country, that it will be a great and glorious preëminence for you to have exhibited an example of the contrary, of a statesman who made the sacrifice of his own interest and influence to the real and unquestionable benefit of his country.

I am fully convinced that the gentlemen who were so much dissatisfied with your determination to send the last mission to France acted from motives of pure patriotism at first, however they may have suffered wounded pride and angry passions to influence their conduct since. But in their aversion to the last embassy they certainly proceeded upon inaccurate information as to the general state of things in Europe, and upon judgments into which there entered more of temper than of consideration. Had the issue of the mission been eventually unsuccessful, it would still have been a meas-

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ure grounded upon the soundest policy; but if ever the wisdom of a questionable plan was justified to the utmost by the event, it has been so on this occasion. The convention with France has not indeed given us everything we could have wished; but it has secured us more than we ever could have obtained without it, and has entirely removed the danger of a war which must probably have ended in a dissolution of our union. And this arrangement will not even occasion a difference between us and England, since the British government have given a formal assurance that they see nothing in the Convention of which they have reason to complain.

Probably the individual sufferers under the French depredations, and the party who declared themselves so strongly against the late negotiation, will think the want of a stipulation for complete indemnity a sufficient objection against the conclusion of the treaty. But those who know how impossible any stipulation of indemnity is to obtain where it cannot be compelled, or how illusive and nugatory it would be if made, will be convinced, as I think the people of the United States in general will be convinced, that the convention taken altogether is highly advantageous to us.

Let then a thinking and impartial man compare the situation of the United States on the 4th of March, 1797, when you assumed the functions of their first Executive magistrate, with their situation on the same day 1801, when I here suppose they will cease. Let him observe them at the first period, at the point of war to every appearance inevitable with France and Spain, yet at the same time having the highest reason to complain against the treatment of Great Britain. At the last period in full and, as far as human foresight can judge, in safe and permanent peace with all these

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powers. And let him ask himself how much of this favorable change ought justly to be ascribed to you; the answer will flash with the light of demonstration; had you been the man of one great party which divides the people of the United States, you might have purchased peace by tribute under the name of loans and bribes, under that of presents, by sacrificing with pleasure, as one of the leaders of that party formally avowed his disposition to do, the rights of the Union to the pleasure of France by answering her injuries with submission and her insults with crouching. Had you been the man of the other party, you would have lost the only favorable moment for negotiating peace to the best advantage, and at this moment would have seen the United States at open war with an enemy in the highest exultation of victory, without an ally and, in the general opinion of the world if not in real truth, little better than once more a colony of Great Britain. In resisting, therefore, with all the energy which your constitutional power enabled you to exercise and all your personal influence could excite among your countrymen, the violence of France, you saved the honor of the American name from disgrace and prepared the way for obtaining fair terms of reconciliation. By sending the late mission you restored an honorable peace to the nation, without tribute, without bribes, without violating any previous engagement, without the abandonment of any claim of right, and without even exciting the resentment of the great enemy of France. You have, therefore, given the most decisive proof that in your administration you were the man not of any party, but of the whole nation, and if the eyes of faction will shut themselves against the value of such a character, if even the legal and constitutional judgment of your country as expressed by their suffrages at an election will be insensible to it, you can safely and confidently appeal from the voice

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of heated and unjust passions, to that of cool and equitable reason, from the prejudices of the present to the sober decision of posterity.

. . . . . .

Ever devotedly yours.

TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

BERLIN, 3 December, 1800.

. . . . . .

You speak of it as a problematical point, whether the federalists will divide at the new election; by all the accounts from America it appears unquestionable that they will, and I consider already the result as perfectly ascertained. You are so extremely discreet about the original cause of the difference which has ended in a scission of the friends to government and order, that I know not even to this day what it is imputable to. But if the last mission to France was the point, every real friend of the President and of our country will rejoice that he adopted and persisted in that measure, though it should be at the expense of his election. There has been no one period since the commencement of our present national government, when the aspect of our affairs with relation to foreign states has been so favorable as at the present moment. We have indeed suffered injustice from both the great warring powers, and in settling our controversies with them have made our sacrifices for the benefit of preserving peace. But compare our losses and sufferings, I will not say with those of any nation which has been engaged in the war, but with those of any other neutral nation, and we shall have reason to esteem ourselves perfectly fortunate. Whoever considers how essentially weak our government is, and with what a violent and powerful inter-

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nal opposition it has had to contend, in carrying through every measure, with the immense importance of establishing as a precedent the system of neutrality in all the wars of Europe in which they have no concern, will do ample justice to the wisdom and firmness of that policy which the first President of the Union adopted, and which his successor has so happily accomplished, that whatever the future events in Europe may be, we at least have a fair and rational hope of escaping the calamities of war. With respect to our internal concerns they still appear to have their dark and gloomy sides. The spirit of faction reigns with unabated virulence, and even the sense of the indispensable necessity of the national union for the welfare of all, seems rather to be weakening than gaining strength in the minds of the people. Those absurd principles of unlimited democracy which the people of our Southern states, by the most extraordinary of all infatuations have so much countenanced and encouraged, are producing their natural fruits, and if the planters have not discovered the inconsistency of holding in one hand the rights of man, and in the other a scourge for the back of slaves, their negroes have proved themselves better logicians than their masters. I hope, however, that the dreadful catastrophe which befell the French islands of the West Indies will yet be avoided in every part of our country, and above all that any insurrection of the blacks will, far from meeting any encouragement in the eastern states, have every exertion of their energy employed for its suppression.[1]

. . . . . .

I am ever yours.

[1] See *Writings of John Adams*, IX. 92. "With respect to the negro insurrection in South Carolina and Virginia, I hear from my brother (October 19), that it is no longer alarming for the present moment. But whether it will make the democratisers of the old Dominion feel the tie that should hold them strongest to the Union, I am far from being sure. They have acted and talked so long in direct op-

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TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

BERLIN, 20 December, 1800.

. . . . . .

I am much obliged to you for giving me at length some clue to the causes from which the division of the party, which had been hitherto friendly to the government, has proceeded. Though I deeply lament these dissensions, and consider them as highly dangerous to the welfare of the country, I am pleased, cordially pleased, that the articles of crimination against the President are all tantamount to a complaint, that he has acted as the head of the nation, and not as the head of a party. Mr. Gerry's appointment upon the second mission to France was not a successful measure, and the President certainly did not approve of his conduct there. Yet as that mission eventually turned, it was I believe for the best that a person of Mr. Gerry's sentiments and principles was a member of it. Had the most federal man in the union been appointed in his stead, the issue at that time would have been essentially the same. What is meant by the non-renunciation of him after his return I do not precisely know. He was not employed again, his intentions were upright, however erroneous his judgment had been, and his former services to his country were such as entitled him to respect. The third mission to France has

position to their own plain interests, that there is little reason to believe they will allow them more weight for this incident. The conduct of men is much more governed by their *passions* than by their *interests;* the whole history of mankind is one continued demonstration of this axiom. Fear, you will say, is a passion too, and so it is; but the influence of fear is merely instinctive, and never founded on argument. It seldom survives the pressure of actual danger, and, therefore, seldom interferes with the operation of active violent passions. So long as the slaves shall not break out in formal rebellion, the Virginians will not feel their need of assistance from their sister states, nor the importance of the Union to them." *To William Vans Murray*, December 16, 1800. Ms.

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been so completely justified by the event, that it cannot possibly be now a subject of discussion. The English government, whose example in refusing to treat at the most favorable moment for negotiation our flaming Essex men would have imitated, now most heartily repent that they did not then consent to treat themselves. The pardon of the Pennsylvanian traitors[1] was not only sanctioned by the example of the former President, but was conformable to the true principles of policy which should prevail in a popular government. Montesquieu affirms that the crime of treason should be treated in Republics with greater lenity than in any other formal polity, and gives substantial reasons for this maxim. With respect to the dismission of the Secretaries, I must place that confidence in the discretion of the President which the Constitution has placed there. It has made their removal entirely dependent upon him, and if these officers become the enemies and opponents, instead of being the assistants and promoters, of the system which he deems most advisable, it cannot be expected they should be retained. It is however quite natural that their dismission should be censured by those who concurred in their opinions. To ascribe the dissolution of the army to the President is ridiculous; but to whomsoever it is due, the measure was a good one, as such a number of troops could now be of no service, and would only have served to burthen the union with additional debt. If a President of the United States to secure his reëlection must sacrifice his country's interests to his party's passions and prejudices, Heaven be thanked that the present chief magistrate disdained to set the example.

Yours truly.

[1] John Fries, Frederic Heyney, and John Getman. *Works of John Adams*, IX. 60.

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TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

BERLIN, 27 December, 1800.

Just as I inclosed my last letter to you I had yet the opportunity to acknowledge the receipt of your No. 21 dated October 25. But its contents claimed further notice from me which I had then neither time nor room to bestow.

I am sensible that by being removed from the turbulent and disgusting scene of perpetual electioneering I am spared many a detail of vexation, which I should otherwise be obliged to suffer, and probably none will ever again take place, in which I shall feel so near and strong an interest, as in that which at this moment is decided. Its result is not equivocal, and in my opinion (which on this occasion cannot well be impartial) is far from doing honor to the discernment, or to the gratitude of the people, upon whose voice the issue depended. The administration of the present President, however hurtful to his personal interest and influence, has been in the highest degree useful and honorable to his country. Whether that of his successor will be equally distinguished for its wisdom and firmness, as little influenced by party men and party measures, and as much devoted to the welfare of the whole nation, it is for time to determine. Never since the period of our revolution has there been a moment of more imminent danger, and more complicated embarrassment for the United States than that when the President entered upon his office. Never have they enjoyed a moment of tranquility and safety, so strongly grounded and so probably permanent. The danger and embarrassment had been only the consequences of unfortunate circumstances. More fortunate circumstances have contributed a share to produce the safety and tranquility. But these themselves would not have sufficed. His merit in effecting them, however it may

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be disputed or disregarded now, I am confident will one day be acknowledged and duly appreciated.

Perhaps the severest of all the trials of virtue is that of finding benefits returned with injuries, and her devotion with ingratitude. Were I therefore not acquainted with the genuine energy of your father's character, and the pure magnanimity of his soul, my keenest feelings at this time would arise from concern at what the effect of this event would be upon his mind. I fondly hope he will meet it as far as human nature will admit with real indifference, that he will sincerely pardon the infatuation of his countrymen, and consider it with compassion rather than with resentment. This temper of mind, of extremest difficulty in such a case to attain, is however so essentially necessary for his own happiness and that of his family and friends, that the bare possibility of his feeling uncontrolled that irritation so natural to a generous spirit under such treatment, gives me more anxiety than every other consideration.

I am not without some apprehensions on this occasion arising from another source. Although his principles of economy are as rigorous as can consist with a mind which appreciates money at its true value, and his practice has always been sufficiently conformable to his theory, to keep his estate free from serious and permanent embarrassment, yet he has been so far from growing rich in the service of the public, that it is not improbable he may in his retirement have occasion for money. I therefore authorize and direct you to consider all and every part of my property in your hands, whether of principal or interest, as subject at all times to his disposal for his own use. If you are certain (as you have means of information which I cannot at this distance possess) that he will have no occasion for this, you will not mention to him that I have given you this instruction, for

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I wish not to make a show of offering service where it is not wanted; but unless you are thus sure, let him know I have given you this order, and that it is my most urgent request he would use it whenever it may suit his convenience.

. . . . . .

TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

30 December, 1800.

. . . . . .

When I received your last letter (of October 25) I did not understand altogether its last paragraph, because I had heard no circumstance to which I supposed it specially alluded. Since then an article in the German Berlin *Gazette* (such must be my source of information from America) has partly explained to me your meaning. It mentions that Tench Coxe had published a private letter which your father wrote to him eight years ago, and containing something (I am yet ignorant what) to the disadvantage of General Pinckney.[1] Likewise that Mr. Hamilton had published a pamphlet against your father and highly recommending General Pinckney as President.[2] Now if these are the instances which you thought would surprise me, your conjecture was natural but not accurate. Coxe and Hamilton I knew had both become political enemies of the President. That their enmity was bitter I had no doubt, because it was unjust, and I had no reason to suppose that either of the men would scruple at such a mode of manifesting his enmity. It is an old maxim of prudence always to treat an enemy as if he

[1] *John Adams to Tench Coxe*, May, 1792. It is given in Gibbs, *Administrations of Washington and Adams*, II. 424. Adams's letter to Pinckney, explaining the circumstances, is in the same work, 425.

[2] *The Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esquire, President of the United States.* See *Writings of Hamilton* (Lodge), VI. 391; *Works of John Adams*, IX. 239.

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might one day become your friend; and a knowledge of mankind will too often prescribe an alteration of the rule, and direct us always to treat a friend as if he might one day become your enemy. From the newspapers I likewise learn that the convention with France was known in the United States before the election took place, but in the state of parties and passions prevailing in our country, that event certainly did not change a single vote.

With the scanty information I can collect I distrust my own opinions upon American affairs. But from what I do see, it is impossible for me to avoid the supposition that the ultimate necessary consequence, if not the ultimate object of both the extreme parties which divide us, will be a dissolution of the Union and a civil war. Your father's policy was certainly to steer between the shoals on one side, and the rocks on the other. But as both factions have turned their arms against him, and the people themselves have abandoned him, there is too much reason to expect that the purpose common to the two opposite factions will be effected.

. . . . . .

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

10 January, 1801.

. . . . . .

Among the other proceedings of fortune to France this armed neutrality, actually signed at St. Petersburg the 16th of last month, is of peculiar value. Whether England will bid defiance to it as you suppose, I am inclined to doubt. I know very well that such is her language now, but I rather think she will not rush at once into a war with the four northern powers. If she consults her *interest* in preference to her *passions*, she certainly will not. The nation you say would stand by the government upon such a question, and

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sink or swim with their flag. Perhaps they would, but in all probability it would be their fate to sink. I do not believe England is able in her present state to stand a contest against all Europe at once. Now none of the four leagued powers, unless it be Prussia, really wishes for a war with England. But they wish to avenge the insolence and injuries they have suffered from her navy, to secure some respect to their flags for the future, and to curb that supremacy upon the seas which it must be acknowledged she enjoys not with the most exemplary moderation. Russia cares least about this, but she has another object to answer by it, and although she appears at the head of the league, the others place but little dependence upon her to support it. Sweden and Denmark are the most interested in its success and will certainly suffer the most by its failure. *They* are playing a hazardous and not a very voluntary game. But they hope England will yield in the fact, however stubbornly she may stand it out in words, and probably they will not be mistaken.

I was very much obliged to you for the cuttings from newspapers inclosed in your letter. I had before heard of the publications of Tench Coxe and Mr. Hamilton, though I have not yet seen either of them. I believe they had given me more pain than they ought to have done, but as their object seemed merely to convey political personalities, I thought it best not to mention them. From Coxe's known character there is no reason to be surprised that he betrayed ancient confidence and private friendship to answer the purpose of his faction and his own malice. It is one of the misfortunes inseparable from public life, that the best of men must often act in concert with bad ones; for be a great public cause ever so wise and virtuous, many of its partisans must support it without being actuated either by pure motives or by durable principles. When changes of this

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world separate this necessary though unnatural coöperation between a knave and an honest man, and place them in their proper opposition to each other, we cannot wonder to see base weapons resorted to for expressing the enmity of a base mind. To complain against the use of a poisoned weapon you must have some other than a savage for your foe.

What Mr. Hamilton's provocation has been I know not. Probably it originated in his aversion to the last mission to France. Against this he not only expressed himself very openly, but acted and intrigued. His weight and influence probably formed the principal nerve of the party which broke off from the federalists to defeat that measure. A foreign quarrel was necessary as a pretext for keeping the army. And an army was necessary for Mr. Hamilton to be commander-in-chief. He thought it was necessary for various other important purposes, and could not forgive the President for persisting in a plan the result of which was to disband the army. After the removal of the Secretaries he perhaps considered them as the victims of a system which he had originated and conducted, therefore entitled to be avenged by his hands; so he boldly sallied forth, willing to run the risk of a President he hated worse than the man in place for the chance of setting up one he liked better. I do not believe he will get anything by the change, not even an army with him as commander-in-chief.

I am extremely obliged to you for the profile which, without pretending to be over sentimental, I assure you I often look at with great pleasure. The frailty of political friendships so frequently and so forcibly brought to my view gives an additional value to those which preceded in point of time all the revolutions or kingdoms and empires which now divide the hearts and souls of men, and which I persuade myself will always be unalterable by them.

I am, Dear Sir, yours truly.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

BERLIN, 17 January, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

Doctor Eustis [1] instead of Otis is not the only change for the worse in our representation to Congress. Otis declined being re-elected, and I hope Eustis will in general vote right. But the division of the federal party has produced its natural effect in Massachusetts, and thrown the whole weight of the election into the hands of the others. So much for General Hamilton and the Essex junto. A composition of great talents and little souls, which will do no small mischief in the end.

If the schisms do not produce a counterbalancing coalition between the most moderate men of the two original parties to support the government of our country, it will soon sink into the regions once visited by the paladin Astolphus.

Yours faithfully.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

27 January, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I have not seen the pamphlet of General Hamilton, but am much gratified or rather consoled that it is such as you describe in your favor of the 20th instant. From the title I had heard of it before I supposed it consisted of personalities rather than censures upon public measures. As to objections against your mission, I have long been at perfect ease on that account. Had Hamilton, or any of his friends, even dared to avow publicly the only strong and real argument they had, I considered it as no longer formidable. An

[1] William Eustis (1753–1825).

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external wound must sometimes be kept open to prevent the internal humors from destroying the body. Without a quarrel abroad the government would not have an army at hand to check projects of disunion and rebellion. This is their only solid ground, but I very much doubted whether Hamilton himself would have the courage to confess it. Now although the strength of the antifederal party and their evident designs to dissolve the Union give this argument great plausibility, there seems to be a plausible answer to it. Our Constitution professedly rests upon the *good sense* and *attachment of the people*. This basis, weak as it may appear, has not yet been found to fail. To support it the aid of military force must indeed occasionally be called in, but ought not to be substituted as the permanent foundation in its stead. To make a foreign war the motive for keeping an army on foot, the evidence must be plain and unequivocal that it was inevitable, not only in its origin, but in its continuance. For if the people once discover (and you could not conceal it from them long) that you maintain the war for the army, while you tell them you maintain the army for the war, you lose their attachment forever, and their *good sense* will immediately side against you. Then your army will be the *sole support* you have. You will have effected in substance if not in forms a total revolution in government. Your internal enemies will then have the hearts of the people in their favor, will very soon be able to raise and bring force against your force, and the chaos of civil war will ensue. No, if the attachment of the people must desert us, let it at least be altogether in their own wrong. Let us knit our system of policy so closely with their interests, that they cannot tear one without rending the other. Then, if after all we must come to disunion and civil war, the consciousness of pure unalloyed justice and right will be the

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highest ornament of our victory, or the most impregnable refuge of our defeat.

So far am I then from having any concern in future about the French negotiation, that I confidently believe it will be considered as one of the President's most distinguished services, and the greater the opposition against it by those who, under the name of his friends, would have been his leaders, the more honorable I am persuaded the result will prove to him. What the true point of my anxiety has in this case been I will candidly tell you, when I shall have seen Hamilton's publication. As for the man, I too have always had a very high opinion of his talents and of his services. His system of finance I did consider as more complicated than was necessary, and the purity of his principles from frailties of *ambition* as not absolutely unquestionable. The rancor and the baseness of the means exerted against him by his enemies and rivals gave his merit an additional value and a stronger claim to support. Perhaps these rivals hurt in a way even unexpected to themselves. Perhaps by using infamous weapons against him they habituated his mind to consider the employment of them as warrantable. This degradation of soul, which you so justly describe in one of your late letters as the too natural result of our newspaper electioneering altercations, is to such a character as Hamilton's a greater injury, than all the charges that envy or malice under the mask of public spirit were ever able to conjure against him.

I am persuaded with you that if the armed neutrality ends in war, Great Britain will *at sea* be constantly triumphant. Nor do I suppose this is doubted by the Powers forming the league themselves. But there is Constantinople to comfort Russia, and there is Hanover to indemnify Prussia. If the principles of the armed neutrality be to these powers any

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object at all, it is but a very minor and secondary one indeed. Sweden and Denmark were coaxed and dragged and pushed into the measure, which they will pay for at a tremendous price. Upon them it was what in the old French law used to be called *a rape by seduction*, and you see that no sooner has Paul had his will of the poor frail ones than he casts one of them off with the most ineffable contempt. Though I somewhat scruple whether we can supply England with hemp, and tar, and iron, quite so soon and to such an extent as you anticipate, I have not the smallest doubt but that she will get these articles. She will get them indirectly from her enemies themselves. The sale of the goods is at least as necessary to them as their purchase is to her, and as you say of her manufactures, mutual want will burst through the very strongest barriers of war. When this plan of a new armed neutrality was first in agitation I was inclined to think we might take a part in it as far as could be consistent with our engagements, and so wrote home. The principles are more liberal than those of England and if generally adopted would prove a real benefit to humanity. But from the moment when the drift of the two *great* parties to this league was evident, I have been convinced that our policy is to have nothing to do with it, and all my dispatches have been calculated to impress as much as possible that opinion.

Your recollections as to the first place of our meeting form such a doubly pleasing association of ideas that I am unwilling to believe them not exactly accurate. Mr. W. Vaughan's house has in my remembrance the advantage of being the spot where our acquaintance commenced. We dined there together. Had an interesting conversation upon the merits of the Christian and the Mahometan *Paradise*, and went in the evening to hear a debate at Coachmaker's hall. But whenever our friendship began I hope

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and trust that no spot on this earth is destined to witness its end, but that I shall ever as at this moment be invariably yours.

JOHN ADAMS TO JOHN MARSHALL

WASHINGTON, January 31, 1801.

I request you would cause to be prepared letters for me to sign, to the King of Prussia, recalling Mr. John Quincy Adams, as minister plénipotentiary from his court. You may express the thanks of the President to his Majesty for the obliging reception and kind treatment this minister has met with at his court, and may throw the letter into the form of leave to return to the United States. You will look into the forms, in your office, of former instances of recall. I wish you to make out one letter to go by the way of Hamburg, another by Holland, a third by France, a fourth through Mr. King in England, a fifth, if you please, by the way of Bremen or Stettin, or any other channel most likely to convey it soon. It is my opinion this minister ought to be recalled from Prussia. Justice would require that he should be sent to France or England, if he should be continued in Europe. The mission to St. James is perfectly well filled by Mr. King; that to France is no doubt destined for some other character. Besides, it is my opinion that it is my duty to call him home.[1]

TO RUFUS KING

BERLIN, 7 February, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I hope and trust that our *new* administration will *not* join in the general combination forming against England, because it would neither be politic nor honorable. But there is a high probability, if not more, that Europe will be

[1] The letter of recall, dated February 3, reached Adams in Berlin, April 26, 1801.

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joined in it, and in my opinion if any neutrality is suffered in this quarrel, it will be a neutrality strong enough to protect itself.[1] The league of armed neutrality has been ratified by all the four northern powers, and doubtless France and Russia wish no better than that England should persist in her determination to make war against them for it. Envy is as strong and active a principle of national conduct as pride, or rather it is the same principle. It has had too great an influence on both parties to produce this new flame of discord in Europe. England has not enjoyed her naval superiority with moderation. And the others hate her at once for her prosperity and her elation under it. To indulge their passions they are all running to their ruin, while the Frenchman claps his wings and crows.

I am &c.

TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

14 February, 1801.

. . . . . .

It is impossible for an American to contemplate this accumulated load of taxes and services which are the inseparable attendants of a military government without a sigh over the condition of human society in Europe, and an ejaculation of gratitude to Heaven for that in his own country. In imputing these evils to the European *condition of society*, I am sensible the opinion is not conformable to that which

[1] "I doubt not but many where you are *wish* the United States would join the armed neutrality, because they *wish* us at war with Great Britain. Armed neutrality there will be none, unless it be one of our own, which you and I most warmly wish too. With you I am afraid France will urge us too much upon this point, but I *hope* we shall stand firm. Heaven preserve us from all war, but especially from an *unjust* war. We are bound by treaty upon the only principle of any consequence in this league. So were Sweden and Denmark. But if treaties are a joke in Europe, let them not be so with us." *To William Vans Murray*, February 10, 1801. Ms.

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faction so delights to prattle, and knowing ignorance to repeat; but I believe it to be the truth. Europe being divided into a number of wholly independent states, it is by their armies alone that they can defend themselves against the encroachments of each other. This spirit of encroachment is so far from being extinguished by the flood of philosophy which poured upon that self-conceited dupe, the eighteenth century, that it never burnt with a more consuming blaze than at the birth of this her daughter. This system of partitions was a contrivance of the greatest of the good old Lady's royal favorites, and she has left it as a precious inheritance to her child. What a number of sovereign states have been swallowed up in the vortex of the last ten years, for the crime of being weak and unable to resist an invading army! What a number more are upon the point of suffering the same fate! The tendency of Europe is so manifestly towards consolidation that, unless it should suddenly and unexpectedly take a different turn, in a few years there will be not more than four or five sovereign states left of the hundreds which covered the surface of this quarter of the globe. An army, therefore, is as necessary to every European power which has any hope of long existence as air to the motion of the lungs, and France through the whole course of the revolution has been so convinced of this, that she has not only kept on foot such armed myriads hitherto, but has settled for her peace establishment one of the largest armies in Europe. Now it is impossible that such armies should be levied, recruited, and maintained, without principles and measures of continual compulsion upon the people. Hence France in her republican state has continued to practice them under the name of conscription, and requisition, and loan, more than the most despotic of enemies. Hence England, a country

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justly renowned for its liberty, has always been obliged to adopt the system as her insular situation modifies it with regard to her — by the impressment of seamen for her navy. And if she has hitherto avoided the other part of it, requisition or the compulsive raising of stores, provisions, labor, etc., it has only been by draining the pockets of posterity and loading their shoulders with debts which will end in bankruptcy.

It is from the consideration of these things more than from any others that I look to the *Union* of our country as to the sheet anchor of our hopes, and to its dissolution as to the most dreadful of our dangers. So long as we remained united, a large *permanent* army can never be necessary among us. The only occasion which can require a great military force will be to withstand external invasion, a danger to which we shall become daily less exposed as our population and strength increase. If once we divide, our exposure to foreign assault will at once be multiplied in proportion to the number of states into which we shall split, and aggravated in proportion to the weakness of every single part compared with the strength of the whole. The temptations of foreign powers to invade us will increase with the prospect of success which our division will present them, and fortresses and armies will be then the only security upon which the disunited states can rely for defence against enemies from abroad. This is not the worst. Each of the separate states will from the moment of disunion become with regard to the others a foreign power. Quarrels, of which the seeds are too thickly sown, will shoot up like weeds in a rank soil between them. Wars will soon ensue. These must end either in the conquest of one party by the other, or in frail, precarious, jealous compromises and momentary truces under the name of peace, leaving on both sides the burden of its army as the

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only guarantee for its security. Then must the surface of our country be bristled over with double and treble ranges of rock hewn fortresses for barriers, and our cities turned into gaols by a circumference of impenetrable walls. Then will the great problem of our statesmen, too, be what proportion of the people's sweat and blood can be squeezed from them to maintain an army without producing absolute death. I speak in the sincerity and conviction of my soul in declaring that I look upon standing armies, intolerable taxes, forced levies, contributions, conscriptions, and requisitions, as the unavoidable and fatal chain of which disunion is but the first link.

. . . . . .

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 182 [JOHN MARSHALL]

BERLIN, 21 February, 1801.

SIR:

In addition to the papers which I had the honor of sending you with my last letter, I now inclose a translation of the ordinance annexed to the convention for an armed neutrality, and referred to in its third article.

It is yet possible that England may discover some means of avoiding the issue of a war with almost all Europe on this occasion; but I know not by what other expedient than that of conforming herself to the principles prescribed by the northern powers.

But if she should persist in her refusal to recognize them, a war will inevitably be the consequence; and as there is some reason to apprehend that endeavors will be made on the part of the coalition to draw the United States into it, I take the liberty of stating to you, as briefly as possible, the

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considerations upon which it appears to me, that it would be neither just, nor expedient for us to take any part in this quarrel.

It would not be just, because the government of the United States have long since declared their opinion, that by the law of nations, independent of the stipulations of treaties, an enemy's cargo cannot be protected by a neutral bottom; and though always anxious to establish the contrary by voluntary agreement, they have ever disavowed all pretence of a right to force its adoption upon other powers, and by the positive engagement of a treaty are bound to acquiesce in the practice of the rule as it originally stood. It is true, that Sweden and Denmark are bound by the stipulations of their treaties with England in the same manner, nor do I know upon what grounds these powers can reconcile their ancient with their modern stipulations. But even if the question was considered as doubtful, the fundamental principles of this league seem unjust; it has itself the radical defect against which it professes to contend. It assumes a right of legislation upon the sea. It is an enactment by the nations, of laws upon objects of common concern to all, with a declaration, that if other nations will not consent to them peaceably, they shall be forced upon them at the mouth of the cannon. It is impossible to assume the supremacy of the seas more plainly and arrogantly than this. The inconsistency of the league with the liberty which it professes to support, is striking in the very expression of the third article. The two sovereigns say, that to prevent the liberty of trade and navigation from depending upon *arbitrary construction*, dictated by a partial and momentary interest, they *understand and will* (what else is that but that arbitrary construction ?) that in time of war all neutral ships shall neutralize all property on board, except a specific list of contraband.

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It is well known that this idea of being the legislatrix of the ocean and giving the world a code of naval laws, was the lure of flattery by which the Empress Catherine was first drawn into the original armed neutrality, the nature and tendency of which she so little understood, that she thought it pointed against Spain and much to the advantage of England.

In expressing thus unequivocally my opinion, that this league is not founded upon a basis of justice, I beg not to be understood as approving the practices towards neutrals of the British navy, or all the principles avowed by the British admiralty courts. There is too much reason for the complaints of neutral powers against these, and I should consider a *real* armed neutrality, a concert of neutral powers to maintain if necessary by force their common rights against violation, as perfectly justifiable, as a desirable object. Had this new league even been such as the newspapers in Holland and Germany have represented it, had it left the litigious belligerent and neutral claims respecting the character of a ship and her cargo to be stipulated *by treaty*, engaging at the same time to conclude no treaty for the future with any power which should refuse to recognize the predominance of the neutral right, no objection of injustice could be made against it. I have often avowed the hope that some such concert might take place, but there appears less chance for it now than ever.

To those who think that any measure on the part of a nation can be expedient which is at the same time unjust, it may be much more questionable what the conduct of the United States on this occasion should be. While Britain is at war with all Europe, it is probable, to say the least, that she will sink under the contest. To join in the number of her enemies may be considered as advisable as to avoid

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their resentment and to share in her spoils. By joining them we should make the common triumph more certain, and we should establish forever the most liberal principles for the benefit of neutral navigation. We should obtain satisfaction for the long complaints of our commerce, and security against the repetition of such abuses for the future. Some of these motives, perhaps, no one would avow, yet if the consideration of justice is to be set aside, they are the strongest that can be urged. But the triumph of the coalition, even if we should join in it, is very far from being certain. Should it be obtained, it will only be after a struggle, in which all the powers concerned in the league, who have any considerable interest in the principles of maritime law, would have sacrificed more of blood and treasure, than centuries of undisturbed enjoyment of their principles could repair. England has the advantage of standing alone, and of having her forces applied by a single interest of contending upon her own element, and in a defensive cause. Her enemies are divided in interests. The only two formidable powers of the league entered in for the purpose of securing objects entirely distinct from the rights of navigation. Should they succeed in obtaining their real purposes, they will very soon abandon the pretexts, when once they have secured their own interests, they will drop one by one from the league, and leave their feeble allies to be the victims of the contest. Should they fail, they will be still readier to forsake an unsuccessful cause. The experience of the last ten years has abundantly proved, that success and defeat are alike efficacious in dissolving enormous coalitions against a single great power. Thus probable as it may be that England will be ruined by this war, the probability is much greater that the inferior maritime states leagued against her will meet the same fate. As a mere question of choice

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between two evils, if we must choose between the resentments of the whole coalition and a war with England, we should probably receive the greatest damage from the last. I am likewise convinced that a fixed resolution to persevere through this new contest in that neutrality, which was established as our true system of policy at the commencement of the maritime war, will carry us through all the inconveniences, embarrassments, and vexations, to which the coolness and even the resentment of the coalition may subject us.

To the government of the United States I am persuaded that the last of these considerations will be unnecessary. They will inquire only what conduct the national honor and dignity, the laws of nations and the engagements of treaties, dictate, and to those they will faithfully adhere. But to ensure the respect of both parties, this system must be supported by a respectable armed naval force, and a force which, in case of war would be scarcely better than none at all, will amply suffice for the support of neutrality.

I am &c.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

24 February, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

. . . . . .

I am altogether of your opinion that this northern coalition contains the seeds of very baneful weeds, which there may be an attempt to try upon our soil. But *in the north* I do not think there is any design to compel our accession to it. The north of Europe (excepting Denmark) think very little about us, and in my opinion the longer this inattention continues the better it will be for us. I would rather contribute to increase than remove it.

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The maritime states, and most especially the English, French, and Batavians, do certainly remark our *growing* strength with the feelings natural to the human mind at the sight of a rival's prosperity. This will be one of the reasons why your friends at the Hague will wish us involved somehow or other in this contest. But I do not imagine we need be very anxious on this score. A very strong apprehension of a design sometimes contributes to inspire it where it would not else have been formed. We know it is against the *interest* of the coalition to push us hard upon this point. We know they have no right to push us. And we know that we could not comply without violating our engagements. If upon such ground we do not stand firm it will be our own fault. To say the truth I do not believe France will press it upon our new administration. She might have pressed it upon the old one. Then her *object* would have been to embarrass. Now it will be to favor.

Your extraordinary concern at the possibility that the election should fall upon Mr. B[urr] is, perhaps, founded upon some knowledge of his personal character which I do not possess. For supposing the merits of the two men equal, do you not think some essential benefits for the country might result from that very circumstance? If anything hurtful is to be apprehended from the administration of either, can it be effected otherwise than by the firm, compact, and united influence of both, and of all their respective partisans? Now if B[urr] should be placed at the first post, would J[efferson] remain at the second? And if he did, would there be for four years together a cordial union of sentiments and of measures between them and the friends of both? The design of their party was to place J[efferson] first and B[urr] second. If the order should be inverted, neither of them could change it back; and if acquiescing in it the party

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should afterwards continue to harmonize, I should really begin to believe that human nature is turning over a new leaf. If they once divided, it seems to me that whatever Mr. B[urr]'s dispositions are, he could not do any essential harm, and the principal evil that would flow from the choice would be to see a man President of the United States whom not one citizen of the whole Union would have wished to see in that station. This would, indeed, demonstrate a flagrant defect in the mode of election prescribed by the Constitution; and as all evils must be felt before they can be remedied, this might produce an alteration evidently necessary in that instrument.[1]

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[1] "I should not be surprised that the *party vote* in case of a second election were to fall upon B[urr], because it seems to me that party motives would all lead to that issue. But as the opposite party vote will be unanimous for J[efferson], and all the *greys*, together with some of the purest and best men will join them, I have scarce a doubt but that the last will be chosen. My personal feelings are all for J[efferson], because I know him, know he has long esteemed me beyond my deserts, and I have reason to believe contributed much by his testimony, if not by his recommendation to the first President, to introduce me into the public service. The other I never saw. But upon substantial public grounds I am not certain which vote would be most eligible. If great mischief is really the system of the party, B[urr] would be the man, because his being at their head would be the most likely mean to split them up.

"Our Senate it seems only ratified the treaty conditionally — to negotiate again, a measure which I hope will do no essential harm, but which I do not expect will do any good. If they have determined at once to negotiate further and to disarm too, their policy will be still more objectionable." *To William Vans Murray*, March 10, 1801. Ms.

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TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

7 March, 1801.

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Since the date of my last I have received one piece of important news from America (at second hand, as usual), and one from England. The former, that the Senate of the United States has refused to ratify two articles of the Convention with France; and the latter, that the King of England is ill of a fever, and perhaps with a return of the melancholy disorder which afflicted him once before.

The veneration I feel for the Senate of the Union, a body whose proceedings have always been marked with patriotism and wisdom, forbids me to doubt but that they had strong and overpowering reasons for the measure they have adopted on this occasion. As I understand, a further negotiation is to be attempted. As I really believe the temper of the French government is at this time not hostile to us, and as under our new administration France will perhaps feel yet more inclined to show us favor, I am less alarmed at this rejection of terms once agreed upon than I should have been under other circumstances. Yet I do not indulge a hope that we shall ever obtain a settlement of our differences with France upon terms more advantageous to us than those of that treaty. The terms were not such as in perfect justice we were entitled, but when negotiation cannot be supported by *compulsion*, the rigorous question of right must in some sort yield to that practicability. The fair parceller of estimation is not between what was and what ought to have been agreed to by the other contracting power, but between what was and what could be obtained from her, or between what she agreed to and war. Now, indemnities for the property of our citizens plundered by French decrees and

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confiscated by French courts I believe it impossible ever to obtain. Even if promised they will never be realized, and as long as our *claim* was not abandoned, the mere unaccomplished promise in a treaty would for us be worse than nothing. Objects of small importance or of impossible attainment should not be suffered to defeat a conclusion of differences, which the longer they are kept open may prove the harder to close.

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 10 March, 1801.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

I am almost ashamed to acknowledge how long it has been since I wrote you last, and can only hope you will consider my numerous letters to my brother, most of which I intended as much for you as for him, to be a sufficient apology. I have not received a line from you or from my father since last June, though I think it impossible but that you should have written more than once. My last letter to my father was of November 25.

My mind has deeply shared in all the anxieties, and disappointments, and afflictions, both of a public and private nature which have befallen you, crowded into so short a space of time. The loss of my brother Charles,[1] the illness of my father, and the manner in which his country rewarded a life of labors devoted to their service, were all events which I know must call forth the fortitude and energy of his soul and of yours. The death of my brother affected me greatly. I first learned it by a letter from my kind friend, Mr. Murray, who had seen it mentioned in a newspaper.

[1] He died November 30, 1800. He was born May 29, 1770, graduated at Harvard College, 1789, and married, in 1795, Sarah Smith. He resided at New York.

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Two days after it was confirmed in a letter I received from my brother Thomas. The illness of my father and the result of the election I was informed of at the same time by the English and German newspapers. Five weeks have since elapsed, during which I have not had a single line from America. Mr. Murray, my constant and valuable correspondent, has informed me very lately that he had seen in a New York paper a paragraph stating my father's having recovered from his fever, which it was a great consolation for me to hear from any quarter, and which I hope will soon be made certain to me by more direct intelligence. The issue of the election I could not suppose would be an object of indifference to him; but I knew he had always been impressed fully with the sentiment that every man who serves the public must look upon the injustice of men, so far as it concerns himself, in the same light as upon the ills of nature; the shocks that flesh is heir to — a fever or a clap of thunder — which are neither to be denied for real evils, nor to be complained of as avoidable. Political disappointment is perhaps one of the occasions in human life which requires the greatest portion of philosophy, and although philosophy has very little power to assuage the keenness of our feelings, she has at least the power to silence the voice of complaint. To be relieved from the labors and responsibility of such a station as that of an American President, is a great consolation for all the pain of being removed from it, and will I hope have its full weight as such.

What the influence of the change in our administration upon the reputation and fortunes of our country may be, I do not think it necessary to inquire, and am altogether unable to foresee. For the *past* alone my father has anything on this score to answer. For the future the whole responsibility rests upon the people themselves. If they find them-

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selves after the experience of their new system more prosperous than they have been under the old, the pure and generous spirit of patriotism will rejoice in their prosperity, and forget their injustice. But if the principles to which they have thought proper to transfer their trust should prove delusive, and bring upon them the miseries of broken public faith, of disunion, or of war, deeply will their sufferings be lamented by the pure and virtuous friend of his country; but he will find comfort in the reflection that he had done all in his power to ward off these calamities, and that the people would not have composed themselves to their effects but by first abandoning him.

I have hitherto for the last four years written seldom to my father, because I knew that all my public correspondence will be laid before him. For the future, however, (while I remain in Europe) I shall write oftener to inform him of the principal political events which may occur. I say while I remain in Europe, because I am in expectation of my recall immediately upon the new President's coming into office. He will doubtless have nothing personal against me, but my mission here has been one of the most powerful objections made against the policy of his predecessor, and I presume, therefore, will be one of the first objects that he will think it expedient to reform. The use and advantage of having some public character in the north of Europe is, indeed, at this moment more immediate and nearer the surface of evidence, than it has been at any former period since I have resided here; but those who deemed the mission inexpedient at first will probably find motives, if not reasons, equally strong for thinking it so still.

The north of Europe, and the views, interests and relations of the several states it contains, are, indeed, becoming objects of no small concern to our commerce. Russia, Sweden,

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Denmark and Prussia, while I write this are upon the brink of war with Great Britain upon one common point of issue; but each separately guided by purposes of its own, and each pledging to the contest a different stake. If this quarrel should really break out, the United States will be the only maritime nation remaining neutral, and their navigation will be needed by all the hostile parties to carry a trade alike necessary for all, but which none will be allowed to transport in their own vessels. Our navigation to and from the Baltic, therefore, must acquire a great and rapid extension, and as the carrying trade of Sweden and Denmark must in the nature of things be suspended, our vessels will be no less in demand for the commerce of the Mediterranean.[1] It is possible that this state of things and events resulting from it will convince some of our keen-eyed and large-souled politicians that treaties of commerce with Russia and the Sublime Porte made two years ago would not have been such a useless waste of public money, nor such a proof of absurd policy, as their comprehensive minds represented it. A most profound and ingenious statesman, I remember, has urged in a printed pamphlet the recommendation of these measures by the late President as a proof of his *incapacity*.

That the war will kindle into a blaze is not however certain. Great Britain who would make but little account of the resentments of Sweden and Denmark cannot look with so much indifference upon those of Prussia and Russia. She

[1] "Mr. Maraview, who was minister of Russia and now is third in the Office of Foreign Affairs, took occasion every time we met to speak of the favor the American trade would always receive in Russia, that the Emperor knew we were very commercial, great consumers of his productions, and that the conduct of our seamen and position of our country made ours one of those intercourses which the policy of the court most disposed them to encourage." *Joseph Pitcairn to John Quincy Adams*, Hamburg, March 31, 1801. Ms.

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has talked very loud and blustered very much about her rights and essential interests and her determination to resist *any combination* against them; but I suspect that when it comes to the putting of the match to the powder barrel, she will flinch, or that she will bribe off the great parties to the league at the expense of the small ones if she can; but that she will at any rate bribe them off. Unless it should be already too late.

Of English news I need not tell you. That part of Europe and its occurrences are tolerably well known in our country and you must hear from it more accurately and sooner by direct communication than I should inform you thus distant from it. The change of ministry [1] and the king's illness are the two most important late events of which the consequences are yet covered by the veil of time.

In France the career of the first Consul's prosperity continues, and fortune is as profuse of her favors to him as ever. That he is an extraordinary man, there can at this day be no doubt, but whether his niche in the temple of fame will be in a line with Alexander, Caesar and Charlemagne, or with Hannibal, Pompey and Charles the twelfth of Sweden, no mortal I believe can foretell. It is only certain that he will not stand in that of Alfred, Gustavus Vasa and Washington. He has not yet entirely kicked away the ladders of Jacobinism which so well served his ambition, because he is not yet perfectly secure of his footing at the pernicious height where he has ascended; but he is no longer, as after the peace of Campo Formio, the commonplace declaimer against emperors and kings. *In the name of the French people* he takes the sceptered despots by the hand, and, as he looks at the gold and jewels of their crowns, feels a mysterious sympa-

[1] Pitt resigned on the question of admitting Roman Catholics to political power, and Addington took office.

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thetic itching play round his temples. Yet if the crown were offered him tomorrow, he would refuse it as Caesar and Cromwell did before.

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TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

March 17, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

I most cordially lament the refusal of our Senate to ratify unconditionally your convention, and I confess it was a measure quite unexpected to me. The ratification failed I hear only by two votes. With regard to yourself I repeat what I have already told you, and repeat it with undoubting confidence — the patient practice upon the doctrine of Volusinius — keep your mind calm, and depend upon it that time and events will not only insure justification but due applause to you. They will prove that your convention was the best that could be obtained, and you will rejoice with me if they do not prove what we have too much reason to apprehend, that it was *better* than anything that will be obtained.

With regard to the two articles my own opinion is that as a national measure the postponement without renunciation of indemnification was highly expedient. Your reasoning upon this article was fully satisfactory to my mind.[1]

[1] "Had we possessed a fleet of fifty ships-of-the-line, a coast thoroughly fortified against invasion, a well disciplined and appointed army, but of twenty thousand men, and a people really attached to their government and union, your convention would be justly objectionable for the second and third articles, and you ought to have insisted upon indemnities and refused the restoration of public vessels. As it is, the utmost I dare hope from the refusal of ratifications is that it will eventually do us no material harm, and I am far from feeling so sure as I could wish to be even of this." *To William Vans Murray*, March 14, 1801. Ms.

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But the restoration of state vessels is the article to which I should have subscribed with the greatest reluctance. I consider that as the great and important sacrifice made for the still more important, for the inestimable blessing of peace.

It is not the value of the ships, but the point of honor. The value of the ships is still less to France than to us, and yet you are confident that this is the point which *France* will never give up. Why? Because of the point of honor. It is true the real glory was in taking them, but they were rightfully taken. Restoring them looked like a confession of wrong. The ships themselves were the *material* sensible proofs of our national spirit and energy. They were the trophies of victory. To restore them was a discouragement for the sailors of our future navy upon any possible future call to action! Truxtun would say, why should a brave man shed his blood to take a ship only to have it given back? As to the reciprocity of the article it was only a reciprocity of words. In substance it was certainly onesided. We had taken several ships of theirs. They had taken none of ours. If a man owed you a thousand pounds, would you think a mutual discharge of all demands without payment a reciprocal thing? Whether the situation in which we were with France when the ships were taken have the *name* of war or peace, is alike immaterial. In fact they were taken after hard fighting — really were. It would have grieved me to the heart by the stroke of my pen to resign what any of my valiant countrymen had gained by the stroke of their swords. Yet I would not have split even upon that article. I would have yielded, though I believe with a very ill grace. I would not have concealed from the French commissioners at what a very high rate I estimated my compliance. Your idea that by restoring we showed we did not fear them is ingenious,

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but *restoration* is seldom used as the herald of defiance. Taking and keeping them would have been better logic to the same purpose. In short I am somewhat of old Falstaff's opinion "I do not like that paying back, because 'tis double labor."

Mr. Jay, I learn from the English papers, declines the office of Chief Justice, and also reëlection as Governor of New York. It seems a if the field was to be abandoned completely to the anti-federal party. Be it so. The federal party began by deserting their leaders, or supporting them so feebly, so tamely with such mawkish stomachs, that it was equivalent to desertion. That their leaders should in turn desert them is quite natural. For party zeal, union and mutual support, the antis are ten thousand times superior to their opponents, as everybody knows. I try to look at the fair side of things. I hope we shall not have such a mischievous administration as many people threaten us with. If we do — why Patience!

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Yours most truly.

TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE

No. 186 [JAMES MADISON]

BERLIN, 21 March, 1801.

SIR:

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I have been told by the consul of the United States at Stettin, that some English sailors escaped from Russia, recently passed through that town, and mentioned to him, that among the seamen detained in the Russian dominions under the embargo upon English vessels there were several American citizens. This account came upon so slender authority

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that it could not serve as the foundation for any formal official step. But on the other hand considering that the thing was in itself probable, that, if true, my countrymen so detained might have no means or be aware of no channel for conveying home their claim to the protection of their national government, that they were nevertheless upon every principle entitled to whatever protection that government could give them, and that, as the person in public service nearest the place, it was incumbent upon me particularly to notice these circumstances. I, therefore, stated them to the Russian minister here, expressing a wish that he would ask of his court an order for liberating all such seamen, citizens of the United States, as might be detained by the embargo upon English vessels. Against this he testified a strong reluctance. Enquired how the Americans could be distinguished from the English? For that if merely calling themselves so would suffice to obtain their liberation, they would doubtless all be ready to advance the claim. I answered, that I could solicit the favor only in behalf of such as could furnish proof of their characters as American citizens, but here at this distance, I neither knew nor possessed the means of ascertaining individually who they were. He said that the circumstance seemed to require that there should be an American consul in Russia, who might attend to it. That perhaps the United States had better recall all their sailors in other services than their own, and that even then many would disregard perhaps the recall, or be kept on board English vessels by impressment. With respect to the appointment of a consul, or the recall of the sailors, I made no reply. As he could have no authority for proposing these measures, it is not certain whether his court would approve, and he himself immediately after making the last qualified it by doubts of its efficacy. But with regard to

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impressment I observed, that could not be the case with the Americans for whom I was soliciting, because the vessels detained on board of which they were serving were all merchant vessels, where the power of pressing could not be practised.

Observing him so averse to any interference in what I presume he thought a delicate subject, I apologized to him for having made the application, which, I added, I had only been induced to make from a sense of duty to my fellow citizens. He answered that he could only wish it had been upon a more agreeable subject, as the occasion which had given rise to it was connected with occurrences of a disagreeable nature. He meant by that an intimation of regret that affairs between England and Russia had proceeded to their present extremity. I insisted no further, but thought myself bound in duty to give you this statement of what I did in this, and of our conversation. With respect to his sentiments I have only to remark, that they were unpremeditated, as they arose in the course of a conversation which was unexpected to him. Probably his objection against writing to his court for so simple and so equitable a thing as I requested arose from motives of personal prudence. The detention of the sailors was one of the modes by which the Emperor had testified his displeasure, and he might think there would be danger in stepping in upon any ground whatsoever, between that displeasure and the sufferers under it. In the circumstances of the present time this disposition is susceptible of great apology, if not of entire justification.

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TO THOMAS BOYLSTON ADAMS

BERLIN, 21 March, 1801.

MY DEAR BROTHER:

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The translation of Gentz's essay is published with a neatness and accuracy with which I ought to be more than satisfied. The type and paper are such as we can present without blushing to any foreigner's eye. The only circumstance of regret to me was that by your absence at the time of publication you were prevented from expunging those Germanisms, and other blunders of uncorrected taste, which a number of circumstances that I will not now trouble you with had prevented me from removing. All the passages which you had marked on the corrected copy and many others, I altered myself in a copy which I sent to England with a view of having it published there. But the booksellers, though of opinion that is was a work of *considerable merit*, thought the subject not sufficiently *interesting* to please an English public. There are, indeed, obvious reasons why the language and sentiments of that pamphlet should not be very interesting to English ears, and I could not blame the discretion of the booksellers, though somewhat diverted with the ingenuity of their objection against the publication. I learn with pleasure from you that the opinions you have heard expressed of it are uniformly favorable. The merit of the translation is nothing, or worse than nothing. *Drudgery* at most, which it is usual to despise, even when we commend it. But the merit of the original author is so well known and so firmly established in every part of Europe, that if in our country too the pamphlet should not prove sufficiently interesting to reward a bookseller for printing it, I shall not only despair of the

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taste, but of the patriotism of our fellow citizens. The *Historic Journal* is a work of such popularity that an Italian translation of it has been regularly published at Milan from number to number. English and French translations have appeared of several other single essays contained. The author receives a pension from his sovereign for his literary labors and services, and the Emperor of Germany sent him a letter of thanks with a handsome present for his considerations concerning the murder of the French ministers at Rastadt, published in the same journal. For the honor of our country, therefore, I hope that your friend the bookseller will have no occasion to repent his share in the publication of the essay.

I have read attentively the prospectus and the three numbers of the *Port Folio*. The *plan* of this undertaking has given me more pleasure than I can express. The object is noble. It is to take off that foul stain of literary barbarism which has so long exposed our country to the reproach of strangers, and to the derision of her enemies. I cheerfully accept the editor's invitation which you have communicated, and promise my cordial coöperation to promote its success according to the measure of my powers, and of the time left me after attendance to my other duties. Besides the copy which he offers I wish you to subscribe for one in my name, and charge the cost to my account. Send me both copies, but take care not to send any two of the same number in one vessel. Thus coming in duplicates I shall be tolerably sure of getting a complete set. And I hope you will miss no direct opportunity to Hamburg without inclosing a number or two. Of course all this applies only till you know of my recall; after that you will carefully preserve my numbers until I return.

With some hopes that our friend Dennie's success in this

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enterprise will equal his modest expectation, I shall share highly too in his anxieties; perhaps the more largely for his having trusted so considerably to my productions at the first outset for the recommendation of his paper. You know what my opinion of him has been from the first hour of our acquaintance, and I am persuaded his country will one day properly estimate and honor his exertions in the cause of *her* literature. But let us not be unjust to our country. Let us fairly acknowledge that to the success of such an undertaking the merit of its execution is as justly essential as the taste of the public; while at the same time the plan is so comprehensive that it will require great diligence, punctuality, and tenacious perseverance, not only in himself but in his coöperators.

My contributions will be of a miscellaneous nature, suitable to the character of the paper itself. They will be the result of my studies at leisure hours, and as my habits in this particular are changeful and capricious, I must reserve to myself an entire liberty of sending what I please, and in a manner as irregular as I please.[1] It is therefore perfectly reasonable that the responsible editor of the paper should have an equally unlimited license of rejecting whatever he shall think not calculated to advance the purposes of the undertaking, and it is my request that he would always use this license without scruple or fear of giving offence to me. One stipulation more. I was truly gratified by the terms of approbation with which he introduced the Silesian letters and the translations from Juvenal.[2] His applause upon any work of mine will always be valuable. But I must request

[1] A series of "Letters from an American resident abroad, on various topics of foreign Literature" appeared in the first volume of *The Portfolio*, and a review of Gentz in three parts.

[2] *The Portfolio*, January 3, 1801.

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him to exclude all testimony of that nature written by himself from his paper. If he likes what I send you, I shall always be happy to hear from you, and by publishing it he will sufficiently manifest his good opinion. But let the judgment of the public be perfectly unbiassed. Let not a word of praise escape the editor's pen in presenting such of my pieces as he shall think advisable to publish in the *Port Folio*.

Indeed, with respect to the poetical trifles I shall occasionally furnish you, it will be more agreeable to me that the public generally should not know their author. I am not ashamed of the occupation, and hope I shall never sacrifice any of my public duties for it. But there is no small number of very worthy citizens among us irrevocably convinced that it is impossible to be at once a man of business and a man of rhyme, and who, if they knew me for instance to be the author of the two pieces inclosed, would need no other proof that I ought immediately to be *impeached* for incapacity as a public servant. In this notion there may be some prejudice, some Cherokee contempt of literature, some envious malignity towards mental accomplishments; but there is likewise much foundation for it from experience. I am not solicitous of poetical fame, tho' I would contribute what I can to excite a taste for poetry among my countrymen. All the pieces of this kind which I shall send you will, therefore, be signed with one of the letters forming the name of *Columbus*, and I shall be obliged to our friend so to publish them, requesting both him and you not to let the author be known except to such of my intimate friends and relations as may feel an interest in knowing it.

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You say truly, France was very far from being *generous* in the convention which our Senate has refused to ratify. She

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was very far from being even *just*. Our too common error lies in imagining that any nation will ever be generous to us in negotiation, and it would be a fault in us to desire such generosity. We are not and ought not think ourselves a pauper among nations, living upon the charity of others, or a menial, panting for a present of half a dollar. As an independent people let us disdain to ask of our neighbors anything more than *justice*. These I am sure are the sentiments of the Senators who voted against the French convention; but I am afraid we shall more than once have a proof, (as we have had it more than once already,) that even the rigorous exaction of *justice* must be relaxed from, more or less, for the sake of *peace*. To this principle of course not only spirit, but policy requires that there should be bounds; but to a certain extent it must be admitted in every government, and most especially in such as are not armed with force adequate to lend *right*, the arm of *might*. I deeply regret, therefore, the rejection of the convention, being convinced that the final result of the measure will be further injury to our interests without any benefit to our honor.

A Native American in the *Port Folio* talks of an offensive and defensive alliance with Great Britain; but pray has she ever been more *generous* than France? About as generous as old [*blank*] the miser was wont to be; and if we were to ask her alliance, would sell it only upon terms in comparison with which Buonaparte was really generous. And tell me what a pretty pickle we should have been in at this moment, in offensive and defensive alliance with England? At war with all Europe, and liable to be sacrificed by her for the sake of making France sacrifice Holland or Spain.

In general, if you can venture fully a friend's privilege with the editor of the *Port Folio*, urge him to coolness, nay, I will even say to moderation upon political topics. I admire his

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frank and explicit declaration of his principles, and his protest against impartiality between right and wrong. But remind him that his illustrious predecessor Addison, in times of political rancor almost equal to the present, tempered his declaration for the whigs at the outset of the *Spectator* with so much caution in the conduct of the work, that even the tories were forced to read and forgive. Suggest to him that a writer who takes impetuosity for strength, and hard names for satire, is more hurtful as a friend than as an enemy. If I had a right to advise him on this head I would recommend to him to notify all such writers as the "Native American," that they had better apply for the publication of their essays at the *Aurora* office.

This piece is the only one which in my opinion contrasted with the rest. Besides the selections, the lay preacher, the extracts from Mr. Dutton's poem, and the ode upon Prince Leopold, are excellent. Can you tell me who wrote this last? I presume you will not have forgotten when this comes to hand.

TO WILLIAM VANS MURRAY

7 April, 1801.

DEAR SIR:

The issue of our election at home was such as I expected, but I am not altogether of your opinion that it would have been better to have had none, I have indeed less trust in our Constitution and Union than before this event. But after determining to support these by all the means which may ever be in my power, I have long seen the necessity of looking coolly towards the contingency of their dissolution, and have fully satisfied myself that as an individual, and as attached to one portion of the Union, I have not more at

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stake in them than any other citizen, not more reason to adhere to them. I cannot possibly believe that either Mr. Jefferson or Mr. Burr mean to dissolve the Union. If their object be to preserve it, the issue of the election will not prove materially hurtful. If otherwise, if they will break us up — in God's name, let the Union go. I love the Union as I love my wife. But if my wife would ask and insist upon a separation, she should have it, though it broke my heart.

Upon the same ground I feel very indifferent whether Louisiana and the Floridas belong to France or Spain. Like you I did remember Carnot's pamphlet upon finding Tuscany given to the Duke of Parma, but I did not feel alarmed at finding that France was like to get her old footing on our continent. I am not sure but that our genuine policy is to *wish* France mistress of Louisiana. Carnot thinks it would give them *influence* over us, and I think it would raise clashing interests to counteract too great an influence. With a system of liberating slaves and of shackling trade (for France cleaves to both), she will not be likely to employ many means of seduction to debauch our southern planters, and it must be strange indeed if the mouth of the Mississippi and the natural antipathies of borderers should lose their power of kindling animosities under a French government. Let them take Louisiana.

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TO ABIGAIL ADAMS

BERLIN, 14 April, 1801.

MY DEAR MOTHER:

. . . . . .

I learn with extreme satisfaction that under all these circumstances my father has retained his health and spirits. I have ever been fully convinced of his vigor and energy of mind, and was persuaded it would ever bear him up on these occasions, as it had done in many former instances of difficulty, danger, and disappointment. I knew that he was aware that in contributing to found a great republic, he was not preparing a school for public gratitude; that bad passions and bad practices would produce the same effects there, that they had in all other ages and climates with similar governments; and that he himself would in all probability be one of the most signal instances of patriotism sacrificed to intrigue and envy.[1] Mr. Hamilton's pamphlet

[1] "With respect to you as these events affect you personally, it is not for me to tell you that the leaders (as they are called) of the federal party, or at least many of them, are the persons who *at heart* will feel the sincerest pleasure at the loss of your election. After the first moment of secret exultation at the issue, your successor will feel that the contested place is not a bed of roses, and his enjoyments in it, if any such he finds, will often be dashed by the consciousness that in justice it was not his proper place. His friends and partisans who put him in it, will many of them feel the same unacknowledged rankling in the breast at his elevation, as those of the other party did at yours; and amid the general pleasure of a party triumph, every single heart will yearn with some individual mortification. But the federal great men, the men of profound genius and all comprehensive talents, who are alone qualified for the government of empires; the lynx-eyed statesmen and the lion-hearted warriors, who look down with eyes of pity upon your services, while for party purposes they extol them, and think you might do for President, since there was no hope of getting the place for themselves — these are the people who in the general run of federalism will find the soothing consolation, that in the misfortunes of our best friends there is always something *not displeasing*. How many of these characters there are, I am not near enough to observe. It is a breed common to all ages of the world, and to every civilized nation. I trust you will not feel distressed

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I have not seen, and have heard but very obscurely and imperfectly of the Essex junto and their manœuvres. But I could not avoid the conclusion, when once the fact was established of *such* a division in the friends to the government, that the administration would certainly change hands. The usual details of party manœuvring, intrigues, calumnies, perfidies, frauds, baseness and brutality of every kind, I have known very little of and have no desire to know more. That there would be, there was no reason to doubt, and that they have been can, therefore, give no surprise. The alleged motives of a public nature upon which Mr. Hamilton and his party separated from the government are, in themselves, not merely a justification, they are the best eulogium of my father's administration. I very much regret not having received your letter from Quincy, not only as it contained explanations upon this subject, which I am very desirous to possess, but because it would have made known the reasons to me for which you think it would be advisable for me to return home immediately. I am the more anxious for this, because two motives which to my mind are of peculiar weight and importance have led me to a different determination. The first is, the present situation of the north of Europe, which seems more than at any other period to render expedient the presence of a person in a public character from the United States. And the second is, that being under a confident expectation of a recall from the new administration, I do not think proper to have the appearance of anticipating it by assuming it myself. If for public reasons or from private motives the President judges fit to remove me from this place, I shall submit and go home, not to publish a libel against him by betraying the documents of my mis-

at their comforts any more than at the loud mouthed triumphs of your avowed enemies." *To John Adams*, March 24, 1801. Ms.

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sion when they are no longer mine; not to insult him by blubbering to the House of Representatives an insolent complaint against him for recalling me; not to treasure up in my heart wrath for the day of wrath, and ransack the United States for every private confidential letter he ever wrote, to make it a tool of malice and revenge against himself. High and illustrious as these precedents of patriotism are, I will sooner turn scavenger and earn my living by clearing away the filth of the streets, than plunge into this bottomless filth of faction, that with the ordure with which I shall cover myself I may stink him out of office. I certainly never will ask him for any place, not will I complain if he removes me from that which I already hold. But in following my own feelings of delicacy I think that the removal ought certainly to be an act of his own, and that it would be unbecoming in me to ask or by anything on my part to provoke it.

That my brother's [1] conduct is in every respect such as to give you satisfaction, I rejoiced to hear, though I should have been certain it could not be otherwise, even had you not so written. I fully know his worth, and have in him an unlimited confidence. It must be to him a source of equal pleasure to know that he has your approbation. The most exquisite enjoyment which can delight a filial heart is the certainty of giving joy to that of a parent. I should have wished that he had changed his determination and settled in our native state. Without feeling anything of local prejudices I cannot consider either the physical, the moral, or the political climate of Pennsylvania, as healthy as that of Massachusetts. It is not inconsistent with religious ideas, and is much less so that shallow thinkers persuade themselves with the lessons of natural and experimental

[1] Thomas Boylston Adams.

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philosophy, to suppose that the pestilence of the mind which rages with such violence in that State under the name of party spirit, is intimately connected with that physical pestilence which sweeps away so many thousands of its people.

"The first magistrates of a republic (said Cicero) should always observe two precepts of Plato. The one, to sacrifice their own ease to the benefit of the people, and refer to that end all their actions. The other, to apply their cares to the *whole body of the Republic*, and not to abandon one part for the sake of protecting another. For (adds he), they who consult the interests only of one part of the citizens, and neglect the rest, introduce into the city those most pernicious evils, discord and sedition; from which some become partisans of the populace, and others of the better sort. Very few of the whole. Hence arose cruel dissensions in Athens, and in our republic, not only seditions but these pestiferous civil wars. A firm and honest citizen, worthy of being placed at the head of his nation, will shun, will abhor such conduct, and give himself up entirely to the Republic."

It is the misfortune of Pennsylvania to be governed by persons who care very little for the precepts of Plato, and perhaps know as little of those of Cicero. Pennsylvania has taken great and very laudable pains to reform her criminal code, and I hope the day will come when she will be no longer liable to the reproach of having been more solicitous to mitigate punishments than to diminish crimes. It is not from petty larcenies and paltry frauds that the danger of our country proceeds. It is from *political vices*, widening into moral depravity of the worst kind. Against these Pennsylvania has provided no school of correction, no workshop, gaol, no solitary dungeon, though she needs them much more than for offences against her common or statute laws. All the states of our union suffer by the same evil; but Pennsylvania is more afflicted with it than any of the rest.

. . . . . .

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TO JOHN ADAMS

25 April, 1801.

My Dear Sir:

As I am informed there is a vessel soon to sail from Amsterdam for Boston, I now forward to Mr. Bourne to go by her this letter inclosing copies of my numbers two and three upon the *Etat de la France*, [*a là Fin de l'An* 8]. The book itself will go with the copy of my first letter concerning it from Hamburg. Hauterive has generally been given out as its author, but Talleyrand himself is now understood to have had the principal hand in writing it. I think you will perceive in it the discovery of a system pursued by the *present* French government of most imminent danger to the political liberties of all Europe, and even of the United States. It is high time for us to be aware that mere *resolves of Congress*, or proclamation by the *Executive not to* engage in the quarrels and dissensions of Europe, will not alone suffice to keep us out of them. Here is a French minister of foreign affairs who tells the world that Europe must have a new law of nations, that France must make it, and that in the system of Europe France *includes the United States*. At the same time a report is circulating all over Europe that Spain has ceded the Floridas and Louisiana to France. At least in the peace of Lunéville they have realized in favor of the Duke of Parma the plan which Carnot has publicly declared he urged for the peace of Campo Formio as the price of *Louisiana, in order to obtain a powerful influence over the United States*. We must be upon our guard.[1] . . .

Ever faithfully.

[1] The letter of recall was delivered to the king at Potsdam, May 5 (See *Memoirs* under that date). June 17 he left Berlin; reached Hamburg the 21st, and by the ship *America*, Captain Willes, sailed on July 8. The events of the voyage are told in the *Memoirs*.

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